June 2014

Salt

The Art & Soul of Wilmington

Why Is This Man Smiling? (Sorta)

Laurence Sprunt, The Last True Son of Orton Plantation, Tells All (Sorta)

The Cape Fear's Mystery Ship • The Equinox House • The Thankful Gardener

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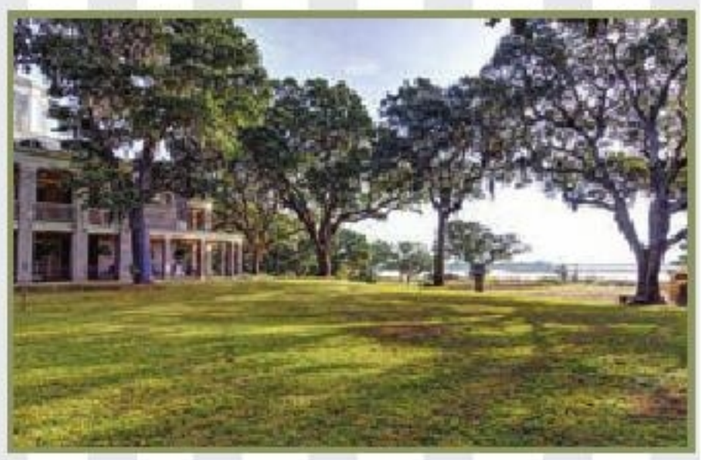

The lure of the sea has always been with us. Over 100 years ago, a magnificent Beaux Arts design mansion was cited on one of the area's prominent bluffs; nestled under a canopy of stately, moss draped live oaks. The tranquility of soft waves lapping at the shoreline and endless destinations that took sailors around the world drew in the likes of the Whitneys, Vanderbilts, Astors and McKoys. Today "Live Oaks At Masonboro" still stands on nearly 8 acres with 300 feet of prime waterfront overlooking the Intracoastal Waterway and Masonboro Island. The Henry Bacon design masterpiece features solid coquina concrete construction made with local Masonboro oyster shells and topped with a slate roof and octagonal cupola. This is a must see for the connoisseur of classic architecture of historical significance. **Price available upon request**

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COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK STEELMAN

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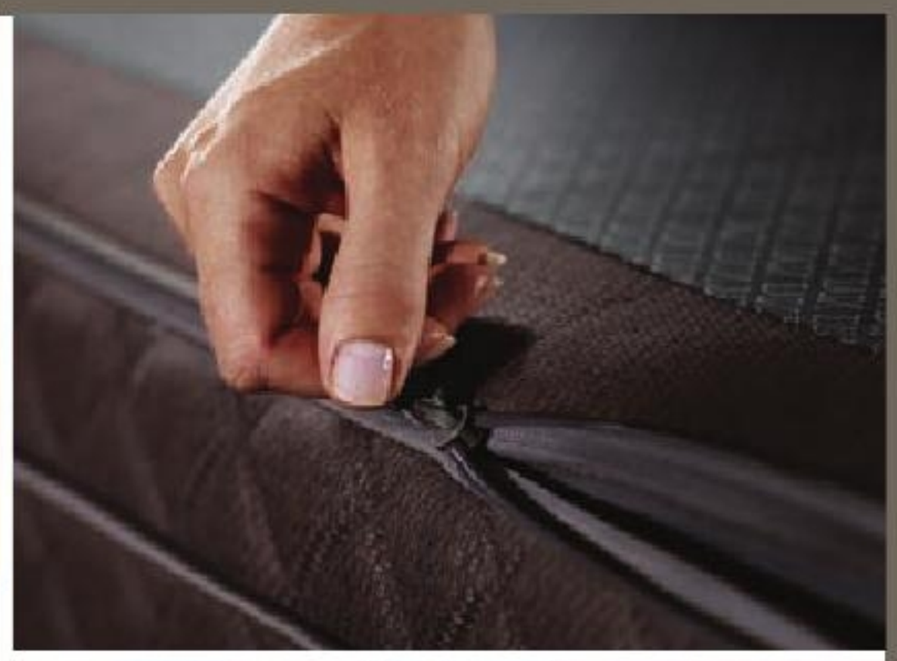

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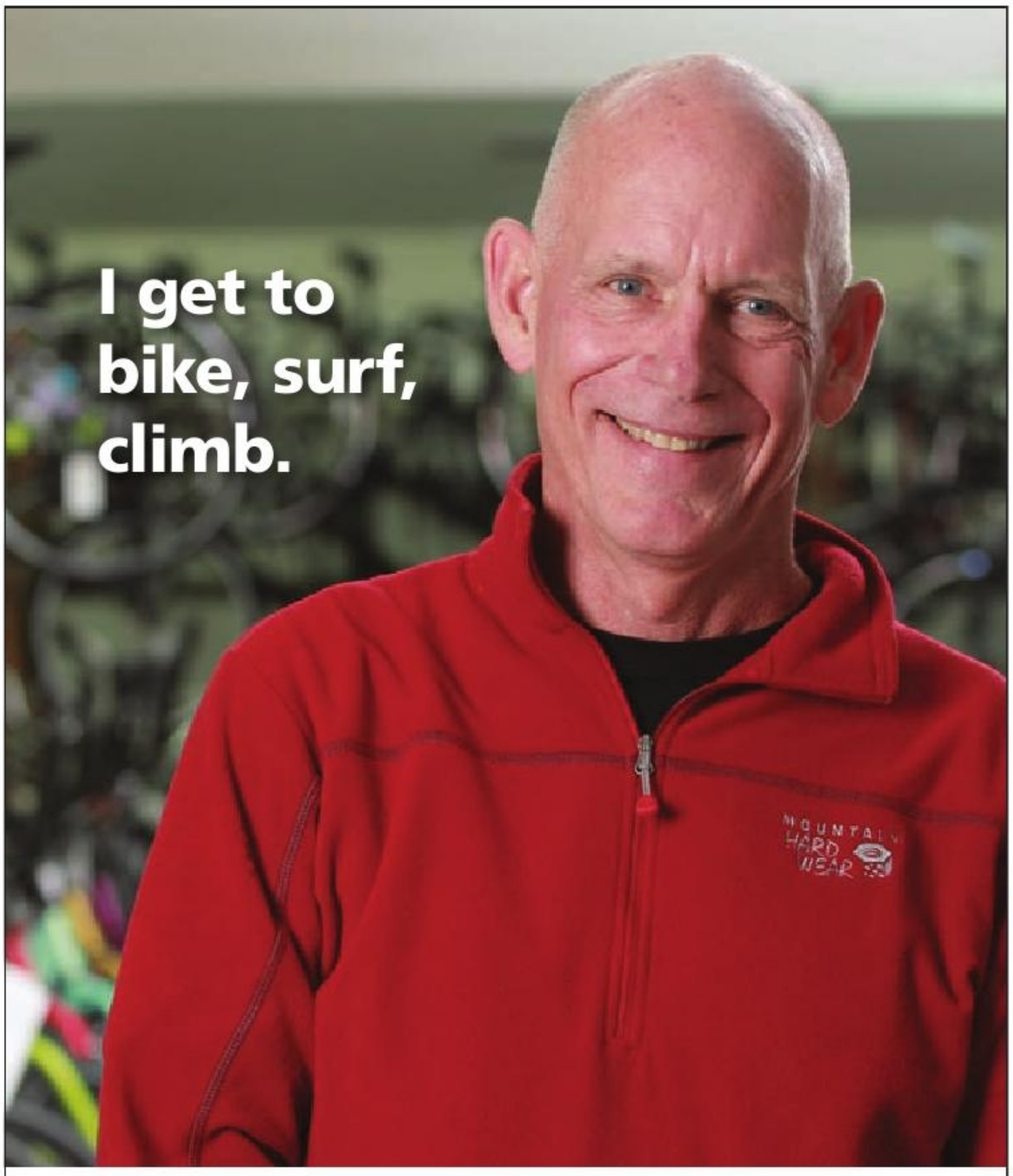

A succession of accidents: biking, surfing and hiking, left Jim's shoulders dislocated, torn and in constant pain. Rotator cuff surgery at New Hanover Regional Medical Center Orthopedic Hospital got him back – on the road, in the water, and on the trail.

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"Children learn as they play.
Most importantly, in play children
learn how to learn."

– O. Fred Donaldson

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1726 Fairway Drive — *Country Club Terrace*

Classic South Oleander home in one of Wilmington's most desirable, established neighborhoods. This house sits towards the end of a tree lined, cul-de-sac and backs up to the 11th fairway of Cape Fear Country Club's golf course. Offers hardwood floors throughout both levels, a formal living room with masonry fireplace, formal dining room, a study with antique heart of pine paneling, and a large family room with wainscoting and a bay window overlooking the sloping back yard and golf course. It is within walking distance of Cape Fear Country Club and is close to New Hanover Regional Medical Center, downtown, and shopping. **$559,900**

2290 Bella Coola Road — *Lake Waccamaw*

Exceptional, panoramic views!! This striking home offers lakefront living at it's finest. Superior views abound from all livings areas. Situated on a high, elevated lot, the home boasts an open airy floor plan with an updated kitchen. The split 4 bedroom plan allows everyone space to spread out. Lake Waccamaw is located just 30 minutes from Wilmington and is an outstanding escape from the busy, hurried life of the city. Perfect family retreat for fishing, skiing, sailing, wakeboarding, or just relaxing. Given this unique property is all on one level, it is perfect for retirement living too! **$599,000**

1802 Hawthorne Road — *South Oleander*

Immaculately maintained home located in the sought after neighborhood of South Oleander. This low maintenance home, with all systems and features updated offers a large master down, 3 beds plus office/bonus space upstairs. It boasts hardwood floors throughout both levels, formal living room and dining room and a spacious wood paneled den with fireplace and sunroom which overlooks a lush and meticulously cared for yard. **$399,500**

4628 Long Leaf Hills Drive — *Long Leaf Hills*

Under contract in 5 days. This totally updated home boasts a huge corner lot in a great location with countless mature camellias & azaleas! Brand new cabinets with custom cherry counter tops, a built-in butcher block, and stainless appliances make this kitchen a pleasure to cook in! The dining area and den are enhanced by a ceiling, with exposed beams, made entirely of California Redwood. The large backyard offers plenty of privacy and many areas to entertain, garden, or play. **$199,500**

6100 Murrayville Road

Excellent development site! Located in the burgeoning North College Road corridor of northern New Hanover County, this site would make an outstanding townhome or apartment complex. It is only 1/2 mile from the center of the Murrayville area which has become a hotbed for new retail activity. Two lots combined for a total of 49.1 acres +/-. Sewer and water are on the property and natural gas is available. **$2,800,000**

111 Tyler's Cove Way

Mallory Creek. This beautifully maintained home is move-in ready, like new and boasts 9 ft ceilings and crown molding in living areas. This 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom, low maintenance home is in the desirable neighborhood of Mallory Creek which offers a community pool, clubhouse, playground, street lights, sidewalks, and low HOA dues. All this is just minutes away from all that downtown Wilmington and Historic Southport have to offer. **$137,500**

330 Gooseneck Road A-3

Swann Plantation. Riverfront boat and nature lover's dream!! This well maintained townhome offers views of the NE Cape Fear River from all levels and multiple porches. All exterior maintenance, landscaping, and dock maintenance is handled by the HOA. The bluff it sits on is so high that it is out of the flood zone! An outstanding escape from the busy, hurried life of the city, yet not far from all that the Wilmington area has to offer. These units rarely come on the market, so hurry to make this one yours! **$179,900**

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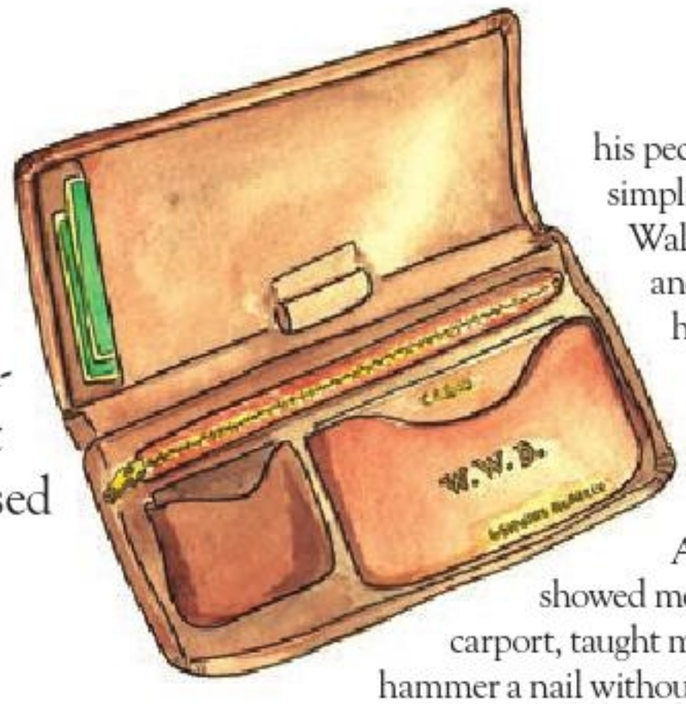
Walter's Wallet

By Jim Dodson



Not long ago, while cleaning out a desk drawer I should have cleaned out years ago, I found a simple but beautifully made full-grain leather breast pocket wallet with the initials "W.W.D." embossed in gold leaf just inside.

It looks brand-new and essentially is — though it was made sometime in the early 1940s.

My father gave me this wallet in 1995 while we were on a golf trip to England and Scotland to play the golf courses where he learned to play the game as a trained glider pilot on the Lancashire coast during the Second World War.

The wallet originally belonged to my grandfather, William Walter Dodson, a gift from my father to him upon his return from the war in the early summer of 1945, when my grandparents took a train from their farm in North Carolina to meet my dad returning to New York Harbor on the *Queen Elizabeth.*

As far as I know, it was the only visit they — Walter and Beatrice Dodson — ever made to New York City. My mother met them there, dolled up to look like Veronica Lake and fresh from her job working for an admiral in Annapolis — being chased around the desk by a "brass admiral," as my old man always ribbed her. She was indeed a beauty, the youngest of eleven children from the hills of West Virginia and a former Miss Western Maryland who up and ditched a rich guy named Earl who drove a Stutz Bearcat before the war in order to marry my father shortly before he enlisted. While my dad was away, the singer Tony Martin offered her a job singing with his orchestra, but my strong-willed Southern Baptist grandmother quickly put the clamps on that.

My dad purchased this handsome wallet for his father somewhere in London's Covent Garden, I learned decades later, and a dozen bottles of French perfume for his Liberty Bride after the liberation of Paris, hidden in the bottom of his military footlocker to get past customs officials. I have no idea what he brought his mother. Real English tea, perhaps.

The story I always heard was that they all went to Toots Shor's on 51st Street for supper that night but couldn't get in for all the jubilant GIs and their gals — settling, in the end, for pastrami sandwiches at the Carnegie Delicatessen. My grandparents, farm people, reportedly turned in early at their modest hotel, and my dad took his bride to a Broadway show.

My dad tried to give me this wallet for the first time on the day of my grandfather's funeral in 1966. I suppose he reasoned that because I was named for both my grandfathers — Walter is my middle name — I might wish to have it as a keepsake of its quiet-spoken owner.

But he was wrong about that — at least then.

I was 13 and didn't see the point of carrying around a dead man's unused wallet, even one I was named for, though even then I recognized its fine craftsmanship, hand-sewn from Moroccan leather, with a fine brass zippered compartment and even an ingenious little slot containing a leather square marked "stamps," a relic from a time when a letter home really meant the world.

Then there were the three beautiful initials in gold leaf.

I did love my grandfather, you must understand, even if I didn't fully grasp his peculiar ways, his calm and protracted silences and natural simplicity of motion. By the time I really got to know him, Walter Dodson had given up his farm in Guilford County and moved with my grandmother to a small cinderblock house surrounded by rose bushes and dusty tangerine trees on the shores of Lake Eustis in central Florida.

I hated going there for Christmas. No place on Earth could possibly have been slower and more boring to my churning pre-teen brain.

And yet . . . Walter took me bass fishing in his skiff and showed me how to cast a spinning lure and, later, in his modest carport, taught me how to cut a proper straight line with a hand saw and hammer a nail without smashing my thumb or finger.

He smoked cheap King Edward cigars and sometimes hummed what sounded to me like church hymns, though he never went to church when my Baptist grandmother did. William Walter Dodson headed straight for his garden.

Mind you, I was never uncomfortable in my grandfather's presence — in fact, quite the opposite. Though I couldn't have begun to put it into words at those moments on those silent bayou waters, he struck me as a man who loved being outdoors all the time, either tying his tackle lines or snipping his roses or hoeing in his large vegetable garden or just sitting in his shaky carport chair listening to what my older brother Dickie and I mockingly called "redneck string music" on his Philco radio as the crickets sang on his lawn and fireflies danced in the tangerine trees. Astonishingly to us, our grandparents didn't even own a TV set.

After Walter's sudden death, after I declined to accept the gift of his wallet, my father placed his father's wallet in his office desk, where it stayed for the next thirty years. He brought it along with us to Britain for what would turn out to be our final golf trip and offered it to me, almost off-handedly, one evening as we were having supper in a pub in St. Andrews.

By then I had a very different understanding and appreciation of my "simple" Southern grandfather.

He was rural polymath and carpenter who never got beyond the third grade but had a gift for making anything with his hands. During the 1920s, he worked on crews erecting the state's first rural electrification towers, for instance, and returned to Greensboro just in time to serve as a foreman on the crew wiring the Jefferson Standard Building, the state's first "sky-scraper."

Walter's famously calm silence suddenly made sense. His mother, Emma, my father's grandmother, was a full-blooded Cherokee woman who was known for her natural remedies along Buckhorn Road between Hillsborough and Carrboro. My father spent his earliest summer days on Aunt Emma's farm, accompanying this gentle Native American woman on her daily plant-gathering walks over the fields of the original Dodson home place. Walter, the oldest of her four sons and two daughters, clearly identified with his lost Indian ancestry — as did, to some extent, my own father. Today, the old family homestead is an upscale housing development.

But like Walter's surviving wallet, nothing important is really ever lost.

One of the first adventures our father took my brother and me on as small boys was to hunt for buried arrowheads at the Town Creek Indian Mound in the ancient Uwharrie Hills. When we began camping and fishing in the Blue Ridge Mountains, he always took a bag of useful books along to read — a hodgepodge of titles ranging from Kipling's *Just So Stories* to the works of Sir Walter Scott – which he called, tellingly, his "Medicine Bag."

ILLUSTRATION BY LAUREL HOLDEN

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William Walter Dodson, I came to learn, was a man from another time and place who knew the simple pleasures and abiding peace of the natural world. His own kindness wasn't showy but genuine. During the Great Depression, whenever someone down on their luck showed up at his back door seeking help, according to my father and other family members, Walter would feed him and provide a bed in a spare but clean room behind his barn. Skin color was irrelevant. My Southern Baptist grandmother, though something of a social butterfly who preached the value of book-learning, wasn't nearly so naturally generous of spirit.

Somewhere in our voluminous family scrapbooks is a faded snapshot of Walter standing beside a black man I only knew as "Old Joe" who lived in that room and helped out on the farm for years. No one knows his real name but it hardly matters. Reportedly, Walter and "Old Joe" were close friends for years.

Save for my own fading memories and a rusted twenty-two rifle and this handsome wallet from Covent Garden — still looking almost as new as that day my father gave it to his father in New York City half a century ago — that's about all I have left of my paternal grandfather, the dignified fellow who taught me to fish in a bayou and saw a straight line and — more importantly — savor the healing quiet of nature.

I tell myself Walter never had enough money to really need such a fine wallet, which may explain its excellent condition. But that's only speculation on my part.

The older I get, the more I appreciate the rhythms of W.W.D.'s simple life.

By contrast, my modern life seems anything but simple.

Which explains why, going forward in this column space, I plan to write about the simple life I aspire to — the small things, people and moments that need to be observed and learned from simply for the grace they provide. Hence the new column title.

This week I'm driving up to New York City to see my son Jack, a recent college graduate working for a documentary film company. Making films is his dream. We're going to play golf together for the first time in many years.

Afterward, maybe even over cheap cigars, I think it may be time I offered Jack his great-grandfather's wallet, which I recently found in back of my own office desk, where it's been since that final trip in 1995.

If he's not quite ready to have it, well, I'll naturally understand.

I'll be more than happy to hold onto it until he feels the need to have it.

Contact editor Jim Dodson at jim@saltmagazinenc.com.

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4 Sandy Point

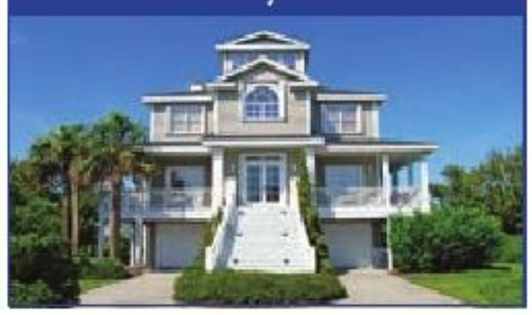
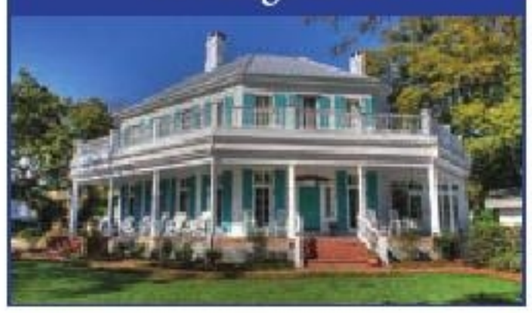


Figure 8 Island. Gorgeous 90 feet of sound frontage with dock, pier & electric boat lift. Ocean & extended sound views. Offered furnished. **$2,499,000**

7 Sounds Point Road

Figure 8 Island. Extraordinary waterfront home. 140 feet of sound frontage. Bulkheaded with pier, floating dock & electric boat lift. Furniture negotiable. Yacht Club warrant conveys. **$3,599,900**

153 Edgewater

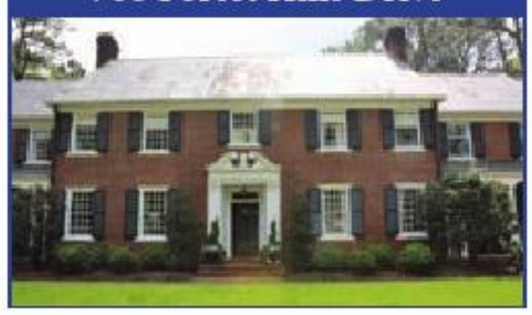


Wrightsville Beach. Gracious southern home off Airlie Rd. Sits atop 1 acre overlooking ICWW & Wrightsville Beach. Gunite pool & 45 ft boatslip. Gardens featured on NC Azalea Festival garden tour. **$2,250,000**

322 Windchase Lane

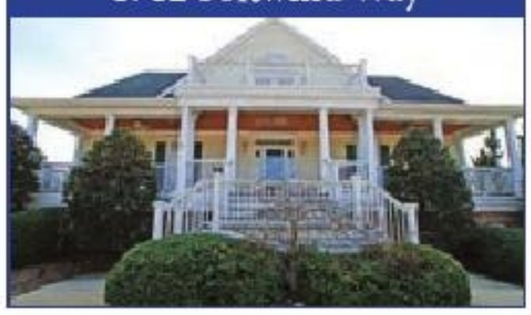
Spectacular waterfront home with 35 foot slip directly on the ICWW. Every room has a water view in this beautiful home nestled in a highly desired neighborhood off Masonboro Sound. **$1,549,000**

708 Forest Hills Drive



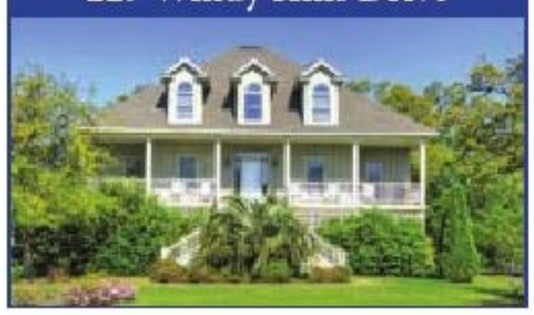
Forest Hills. Stately Georgian perched on 3 lovely acres on Forest Hills Drive. Exquisite home & gardens were site of 2013 NC Azalea Festival Ribbon Cutting. **$1,495,000**

1712 Softwind Way



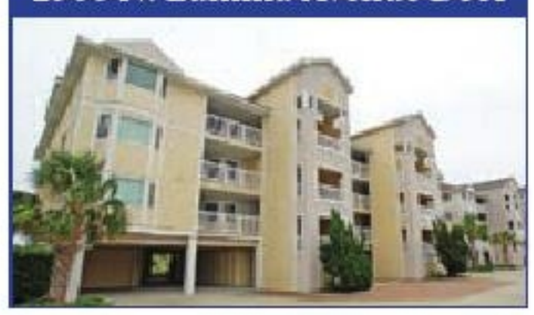
Sounds Edge. 4 BR/4.5 BA home with 27x20 bonus room, 3 car garage and a private dock on Bradley Creek. **$949,500**

229 Windy Hills Drive



Windy Hills. 4 BR/3.5 BA home with back porch overlooking gardens & mature live oaks & front porch with spectacular ICWW and ocean views. Community pier and day dock. **$698,500**

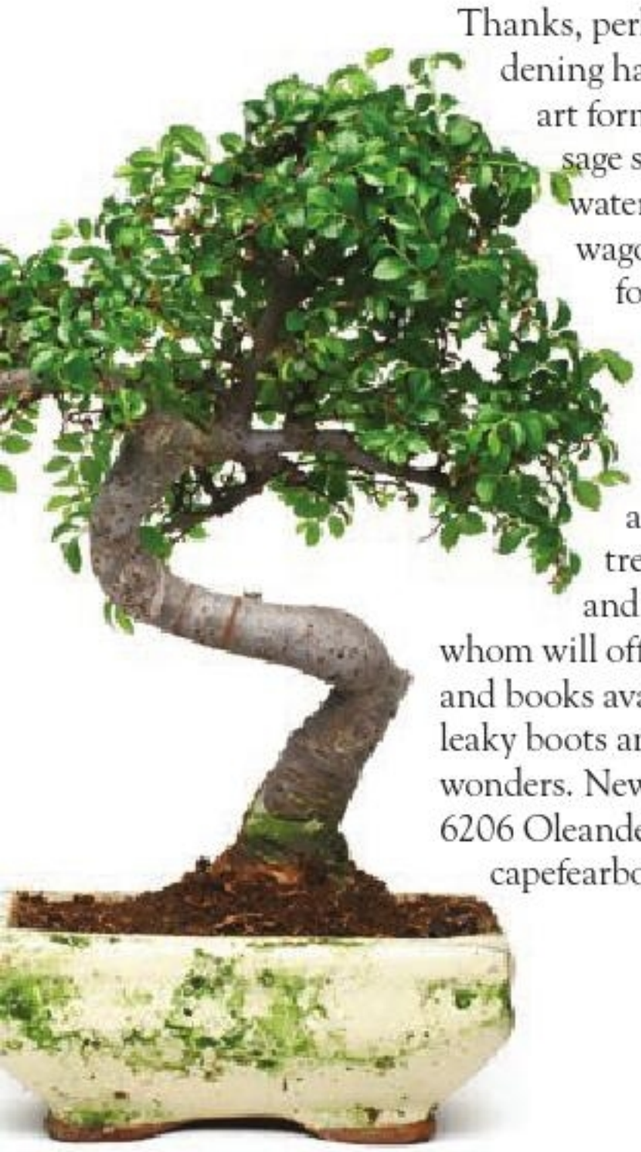
2506 N. Lumina Avenue D3A



Wrightsville Dunes. Completely renovated 3rd floor, end unit, ocean front condo. Offered furnished. Extended ocean & sound views. Assigned covered parking, pools and tennis. **$965,000**

SaltWorks

It's a Small World



Thanks, perhaps, to Pinterest, container gardening has become something of a common art form. Everyone and their mother has sage sprouting from leaky boots and watering cans; basil bursting from rusty wagons; paprika spilling from the claw-foot tub in the front lawn. Bonsai, on the other hand, requires a particular skill. On Saturday, June 7, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Cape Fear Bonsai Society will showcase a spread of miniature shrubs and trees meticulously pruned, shaped and styled by local artists, some of whom will offer styling demos. Bonsais, tools and books available for purchase. Lace up those leaky boots and lose yourself in this forest of tiny wonders. New Hanover County Arboretum, 6206 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: www.capefearbonsaisociety.org.

Indigo Children

Violet Beauregarde would burst if she heard what's happening on this year's summer solstice. Saturday, June 21, don't miss downtown Burgaw's juiciest annual celebration, the North Carolina Blueberry Festival, which honors the historic, economic and cultural significance of the indigo-colored fruit we stuff into our cobblers, pancakes and, in Wonka's case, our three-course dinner gum. Festivities include the Tour de Blueberry Ride, 5k run/walk, an introduction of the newly crowned Blueberry Festival Queens, car and antiques shows, and live entertainment by The Craig Woolard Band, The Classic Collection Band and The Fantastic Shakers. Vendors open at 9 a.m.; festival ends at 9 p.m. No pets allowed. See website for details about BBQ cook-off, recipe contest, and BBQ and blueberry sales, all of which happen on Friday, June 20. No need for a golden ticket; admission is free. Courthouse Square, Downtown Burgaw. Info: (910) 259-2007 or www.ncblueberryfestival.com.

Our Watery World

Here's a fun fact: Our Front Street Spy column was named for Mrs. Rose O'Neal Greenhow, the infamous Confederate spy who drowned in the Cape Fear River while fleeing British blockade runner *Condor*, which ran aground while being pursued by Union gunboat USS *Niphon*. A replica of the wreckage is on display at the North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher, where *Salt*'s Spy (we relocated from Front Street but the name stuck like the ship) recently spent a sticky afternoon observing grinning gators, moon jellies and a school of bright-eyed fifth graders. On Saturday, June 8, 8 a.m., celebrate World Ocean Day and eco-conscious living with a seaside 5k "Race for the Planet" through Fort Fisher ($25–30) to benefit the aquarium's educational programs and green initiatives. North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher, 900 Loggerhead Road, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-7468 or www.ncaquariums.com/fort-fisher.

Son of the Game

When DG Martin interviewed Jim Dodson last year on UNC-TV's *North Carolina Bookwatch* to discuss Dodson's latest golf book, *American Triumvirate*, Martin asked whether he should call the author Jim or James. It says James on all your books, Martin pointed out. "That's because an old crusty professor turned editor in Atlanta told me that 'Jim' is not a serious literary name," Dodson replied. "You've been calling me Jim forever, so why would you call me James now?" We at *Salt* call him our dear editor. And when we last called him, in fact, he was saying how thrilled he is to meet you. On Wednesday, June 4, spend a casual afternoon with Jim Dodson, one of today's most esteemed golf writers, at Brightmore Independent Living, 3 p.m. Dodson has won over a dozen major awards from The Golf Writers of America. He's a twenty-plus year veteran columnist for *Golf* magazine and is the author of ten books, four of which are *New York Times* best-sellers. Not bad, we say, for a boy named Jim. Admission: Free. Brightmore Independent Living, 2324 South 41st Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 338-4492.

Strings Attached

In Dublin, every year on June 16, fans of Irish author James Joyce dress in Edwardian costumes to recreate the 1904 setting of Joyce's most famous work, *Ulysses*. Here in Wilmington, this year, we have a puppet show. Celebrate Bloomsday on Monday, June 16, with a portion of Joyce's novel performed by local puppeteer Gina Gambony and actress Christy Grantham with hand-made marionettes by Nina and Bryan Cournoyer and piano accompaniment by James Jarvis. No breakfast sausage or black and white pudding; beer, however, is available for purchase. Show starts at 7 p.m. Old Books on Front Street, 249 North Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-6657 or oldbooksonfrontst.com.

Return Address

UNCW's nationally recognized Department of Creative Writing presents its second annual Summer Writers Conference on Friday, June 20, through Sunday, June 22. Three-day weekend includes workshops in creative nonfiction with Dana Sachs and poetry with Michael White; courses on Documentary Writing (Lavonne Adams), Writing for Young Adult (David Gill), Working with an Editor (Anna Lena Phillips); and a keynote address by fiction workshop leader Jason Mott, whose debut novel, *The Returned*, was optioned by Brad Pitt's production company and aired March 2014 on the ABC network under the title *Resurrection*. See website for complete schedule. UNCW, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Register: library.uncw.edu/writersconference/home.

Totally Groovy

When mixed media artist James Grashow saw his papier-mâché sculptures rotting like a heap of garbage in art dealer Allan Stone's backyard, he was both shocked and inspired. Decay is part of life and art. And so he spent four years creating a giant corrugated cardboard fountain with the intention of installing it outdoors to disintegrate. "My film is an intimate glimpse of an artist at work on what he considers might be his 'final epic,'" says filmmaker Olympia Stone of *The Cardboard Bernini*, an award-winning documentary which plays at the Cameron Art Museum on Saturday, June 14, at 5:30 p.m. "What is the point of art and creation? What is the connection between creation and destruction? And, ultimately, what is the point of our lives in the face of our mortality?" Film runs in conjunction with *Corrugated World: The Artwork of James Glashow*, on view at CAM through August 3. Discussion and Q&A with Olympia Stone post-screening. Admission: $10; $5 (CAM members and students). Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Ride the Wave

In last month's cover story, *Salt* contributor Mark Holmberg featured a varied tribe of nine local surfers, all of whom proved "the old cliches about the soulful nature of surfing—how you can tap into something so deep, it seemingly changes your DNA." For mural artist Clark Hipolito, surfing allowed him to tap into another medium. About a decade ago, Hipolito was at Folly Beach on a business trip when the breaking waves beckoned. "I went to the local surf shop and bought a cheap egg-shaped beater board and surfed all afternoon." When he got home, he gave the board a fresh new paint job with a custom wood grain faux finish, wooden inlay designs and scrollwork. His board was the talk of the beach from then on. And so he began painting one-of-a-kind surfboards inspired by Chris-Craft boat veneers. "I got a personal phone call from Pink after she saw an article about my boards in a magazine while she was on tour," said Hipolito when asked to recall his most memorable feedback. "She wanted to get one for her husband, Carey Hart." Hipolito works with local board shaper Will Allison, whose boards "capture the essence of Will's old-school mentality," says Hipolito. Not only do they look amazing, says the painter, but they're "responsive and ride really, really well." Boards on display at Oliver Boutique and 1900 Restaurant and Lounge at Lumina Station, Wilmington. Info: www.art-company.com.

World Class Acts

For one glorious week, June 8–15, the Port City Music Festival brings world class performances to various venues around Wilmington for a free, richly diverse summer concert series committed to making high quality music accessible to everyone. Ensemble-in-residence Camerata Philadelphia will perform under the direction of conductor Stephen Framil (cellist and festival founder). Programs feature the works of Adrienne Albert, Harold Arlen, J.S. Bach, Ludwig van Beethoven, Johannes Brahms, Hoagy Charmichael, Antonín Dvorák, George Gershwin, Arthur Hamilton, G.F. Handel and Johan Halvorsen, Jennifer Higdon, Alma Mahler, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Astor Piazzolla, Francis Poulenc and Consuelo Velázquez. See website for complete schedule and to "meet" the talented guest artists. Free admission to five of six concerts; fundraiser concert on Saturday, June 14, 6:30 p.m., $50. Info: www.portcitychambermusicfestival.com.

Life in Slow Motion

In the currents of sudden summer

By Ashley Wahl

June air feels like a wet cloth over our mouths and skin.

Even the pelican seems to struggle, wings heavy as gold spoons working through hot syrup.

The days are eternal. We are flushed, salt-laced and frazzled. We move in slow motion.

From the shoreline, an endless ocean beckons. We close our eyes, let the frothy surf swallow our toes. Relief, however temporary, is sweet.

If only we were cold-blooded — could slink into the briny water, breathe through gills.

**

Naturally, the first thing most children do when they see the taxidermic gator guarding the entrance of the Cape Fear Conservatory at the North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher is stick their heads inside its massive jaws and grin like goats.

They seem to instinctively know that this is OK — that it is purely here for their amusement. What they don't know is that the gap between that saw-toothed maw is more than the former passage to a bellyful of gizzard stones. That gap is a portal to a world that seems both fanciful and faraway, although it really isn't.

The journey begins along the fabled waters of the Cape Fear River.

**

Poe's visitor perched upon the bust of Pallas. Despite the name, no crows at Raven Rock, a crystalline masterwork carved by the rushing river. Children squish their noses against the glass as a school of silvery threadfin shad swim dizzying circles around carp, golden shiner and striped bass.

Down the river, past purple pitcher plants, yellow butterwort and feathery-gilled waterdogs, a pod of wide-eyed fifth-graders beeline for the hidden hunters: shortnose sturgeon and longnose gar.

"Whoa, swordfish!" a boy exclaims.

"That might not be a swordfish," says another.

They read the signage to confirm.

Not a swordfish.

Gar.

They lurk in riverbeds, jaws like hedge trimmers — all the better to feast on shad.

Cottonmouths and rattlesnakes charm the students at the next exhibit, but the lazy gators steal the show. Especially Luna, the pale-eyed albino who sticks out like, well, a white alligator.

"Whoa, alligators!" chimes a duo. "Jinx!"

One student can't believe they're real. When a natural colored gator suddenly moves toward the water to take a dip, the girl gasps, covers her mouth, then giggles madly.

Each of her classmates reacts in a different but equally animated way. For many, this is their first time seeing a real, live gator. Principal Kimberly

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY NC AQUARIUM AT FORT FISHER

Vaught explains that these students attend a high poverty Title One school in Charlotte.

"We raised funds to come here."

**

In the upper level of the Marine Building, where children are allowed to handle sea urchins and whelk, one youngster goes straight for the barbless sting-ray, blonde hair dangling just inches above the coquina outcrop touch pool.

"It feels soft," says the girl, smiling as it swims away. She points to an upturned horseshoe crab, displaying her chipped red nails. A volunteer explains how it will use its long, rigid tail to flip back over.

Nearby, kids crowd round a cylindrical tank as a rescue loggerhead breaches for air.

Elsewhere, seahorses cling to a mass of coral.

**

The fifth-graders are seated downstairs in front of a two-story, 235,000-gallon tank teaming with sharks, rays and schooling fish. They are talking with Tom, the scuba diver inside the aquarium.

A moray eel waves past Tom like a green ribbon as he attempts to describe the majesty of life among these enchanted creatures: sand tigers, porcupine puffers, green sea turtle.

"Why does your mask make that funny sound?" someone asks.

After the show, students detour for final glimpses of the wildly intriguing — lion fish, octopus, the replicated jaw of a whale-eating shark that ruled the ocean millions of years ago — before ambling outside to the Shark Bites Snack Bar.

For a short eternity, the space is quiet.

A young mother holds a sleeping infant and watches ethereal moon jellies dance in slow motion.

**

At the snack bar, the air is hot syrup. Tree frogs warn: A storm is coming. A lone crow hawks for breadcrumbs. Nevermore.

**

The Butterfly Bungalow, one of the Aquarium's latest additions, is where hundreds of brightly colored butterflies flit past weeping yaupon, tick seed, coneflower, bee balm and hibiscus.

Paperkites ornament heliotrope, and a blue moon lands on a tattooed lady with an owl on her calf.

Believe it or not, says Al, the butterfly attendant, the life span of these winged creatures is only about fourteen days.

"I call it their senior moment. This is the most beautiful moment of their lives."

Their days are eternal, remind us to slow down, open our eyes.

Senior Editor Ashley Wahl, our Front Street Spy, is prone to wander.

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BRUNSWICK FOREST
Coastal By Nature

Bridget Callahan's Diary

Funny girl

By Gwenyfar Rohler

Bridget Callahan tilts her head to the side and grins at the audience, a sure sign that she has just rounded the bend to the home stretch of her story. She looks down, then brings her flashing eyes up to hit the audience with the full impact of her punch line. This could be any night Callahan is onstage for stand-up or storytelling at Speak Easy Wilmington. She claims she's still an amateur, but all evidence is to the contrary.

"The grace of this place is that you have enough people that are serious about their art, that they care about that perspective," says Callahan, whose eyes flash with emphasis. "I know when I was 19, I didn't have anybody to give me perspective about what it took to be a writer. Or even how to develop as a person so that people would care about what you were writing about." She pauses for breath and we look at each other, both realizing a powerful truth she has just put into words.

For me, as a native, watching Callahan move through the circles of my hometown is surprising. I still sort of see Wilmington the way a child views his or her home: everything just is. Why? Because that's the way it has always been and what change one notices happens as part of a natural growing process so it is accepted as part of the whole. It took leaving home to realize that our city had an arts community that I completely thought of as a natural extension of life. Surely every town had a symphony, multiple theater companies, a jazz festival, blues society, art gallery walk and more, right? Hardly. When I moved back home twelve years ago, I began to appreciate and value what I had always taken for granted. But now, into my second decade of adulthood, Callahan reminds me that I am failing to notice just how lucky and blessed we are.

A transplant from Cleveland, Ohio, Callahan came here to finish her undergraduate degree in creative writing at UNCW. Turning 30 and ending a long-term relationship had pushed her to want to make a complete change. "This is the farthest south I have ever been," she concedes. "Which is not really that far south." And when Callahan says, "This is an adventure," it's not just geography she is talking about. Exploration of the intersection of words, performance and presentation have been at the heart of her work for more than a decade. According to Callahan, the performing of the work and the personality that presents the work is just as important as the static words on the page, perhaps even more so. That outlook is what led her to start a long-running successful podcast, *The Awkward Sex Show*, while in Cleveland, and to become a staple of the stand-up comedy world in Wilmington. But most recently, it has led her to team up with Beth Staples of UNCW to create a storytelling series called Speak Easy Wilmington, a monthly event that allows participants to perform their stories in a supportive, intimate environment.

"When I moved here, I had to leave that podcast behind — and I really missed it," Callahan laments. She had long been drawn to stand-up comedy but had yet to try her hand until she found an open mic night at the former Nutt Street Comedy Club (soon to reopen!). "I didn't totally bomb, I got some laughs," she recalls of her first try. But what pleased her more than the laughs was the experience afterward when people came up to talk about her set at the bar. She was amazed by the support and encouragement she received — including some gentle, helpful hints from more seasoned comedians. The wheels were turning for Callahan. She loved the comedy experience — but she wanted something a little more narrative-based with a wider reach. When she took Staples' Intro to Publishing class, things began to fall into place. "We just clicked immediately," says Callahan. Staples wanted something like "The Moth," a famous storytelling podcast. Callahan realized that might be part of what she was looking for. Speak Easy had its maiden voyage at TheatreNOW last September and has since moved to Old Books on Front Street on the last Friday of the month.

Though many people blog, few have found the success with it that Callahan has. At the height of her blogging days in Cleveland she was getting over 1,000 visitors a day. That kind of following let her pursue an unusual opportunity for writing: When faced with a financial crisis in Wilmington, she offered her fan base the opportunity to purchase original 300-word stories on the topic of their choice for $10 apiece. "When you do something like that, you have to write about things you don't know about," Callahan explains. "I had to write about urban chickens. I got a lot of requests for kids' stories, which is not something I am generally good at writing." After about twenty-five stories, Callahan called the experiment quits. I have to admit, as a writer I am impressed with her tenacity. I don't think I could have pulled something like that together and made it work. But Callahan had spent a long time laying the groundwork for such an endeavor. "I feel really lucky to be growing up in an age where I have an opportunity [through the Internet] to establish an audience from all over the country. I have people who have been reading me online for over fifteen years now."

Hopefully, that is just the beginning.

Gwenyfar Rohler fell in love with theater at Thalian Hall on her sixth birthday. She spends her days managing her family's bookstore on Front Street.

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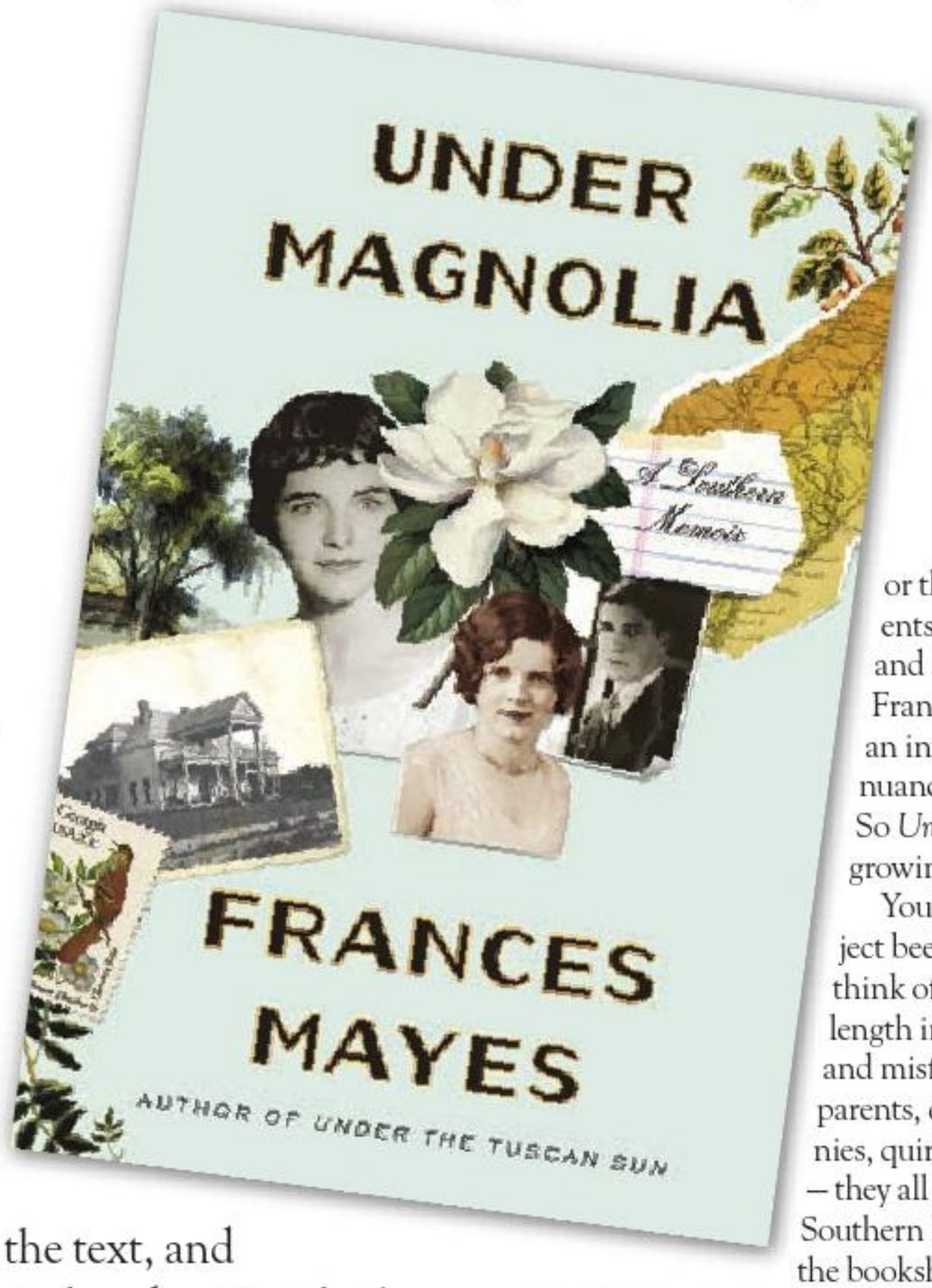
True South

In her lyrical growing up in Georgia, the acclaimed author of Under the Tuscan Sun *brings a vanishing South to life*



By Stephen E. Smith

When I happen

upon a beautifully written paragraph in a book I intend to review, I circle it. If I discover a word that's cleverly employed, I underline it. I dog-ear pages that illuminate the writer's thematic intent. I scatter asterisks, question marks, parentheses, brackets and exclamation points throughout the text, and I make notations in the margins in handwriting that's instantly indecipherable.

My copy of Frances Mayes' memoir *Under Magnolia* is almost unreadable. She writes such exquisite prose that hardly a page has escaped defacement. I want to believe that Mayes is a natural-born stylist, but I suspect her prose, like that of most accomplished authors, has been scrutinized with a writer's loupe in order to eliminate that worked-on feeling. Discerning readers, those who appreciate the art of prose description, are likely to be reminded of E.B. White, John McPhee and Frank McCourt.

Mayes achieved literary celebrity status for her *Under the Tuscan Sun*, a charming, back-to-basics memoir detailing her recovery from divorce, the restoration of a Tuscan farmhouse and her immersion in a foreign culture. The best-seller inspired a 2003 feature film, and Mayes followed her first international success with *Bella Tuscany, In Tuscany* and a pile of related books, including a Tuscan cookbook.

For her latest memoir, Mayes has returned to the South of her youth, recording in astonishing detail her coming of age in the little town of Fitzgerald, Georgia, "where you can recognize a family gene pool by the lift of an eyebrow, or the length of the neck . . . ." Her affluent parents, trapped in a debilitating marriage, bicker and argue constantly, forcing the adolescent Frances, the youngest of three daughters, into an introspective state that sensitizes her to every nuance of the world that's blooming around her. So *Under Magnolia* is, first and foremost, about growing up in the South.

You're likely asking yourself: Hasn't this subject been done to death? After all, it's difficult to think of a Southern writer who hasn't written at length in memoir, fiction or poetry about the joys and misfortunes of his or her childhood. Alcoholic parents, crazy aunts, bigoted neighbors, doting nannies, quirky acquaintances and benighted ancestors – they all appear in Mayes' memoir – are the stuff of Southern literature. From Twain to Wolfe to Conroy, the bookshelves are bulging with masterfully written and thinly disguised autobiographic fare.

What sets *Under Magnolia* apart? It's Mayes' clarity of vision and her use of images that evoke a commonality of experience with the reader – as with this concise description of her parents' anniversary party: "FRANKYE AND GARBERT – A MATCH FOR 20 YEARS was printed in gold on the white matchbooks their friend Marteel gave them for their anniversary. I was seven and it might have been the first little double entendre I got. Ha! The matchbooks suggested many guests at a celebration, all smoking, dressed up, leaning to light one another's Camels, the flaring lights isolating happy faces, the yard decorated with lanterns and the table set with my mother's favorite Country Captain Chicken, tomato aspic, green beans with tarragon. My father in a white suit toasting his bride of twenty impeccable years. But I don't really remember a party."

In one paragraph, Mayes précis her parents' life together. In imagination and memory, the guests, dressed in their party-going best, are smoking cigarettes and sipping cocktails. The lawn tables are set with Southern delicacies. Within the scene there's the obvious irony of celebrating "impeccable years" together, the irony apparent to the young girl who commits the mo-

ment to memory and later to paper, offering up the sad incongruities of her parents' lives framed in a celebratory occasion more sorrowful than a funeral. And there's also a sense of looking back, not as an adult but as a child who can imagine the future and the regret it will surely bring.

Mayes balances these human moments with gentle critiques of those Southern institutions that formed and guided her into late adolescence. She attends Randolph-Macon Women's College and is caught up in the blur of dating and the changing mores of the early '60s: "As soon as The Pill hit, R-M [Randolph-Macon], as it reigned, was lost. The truly revolutionary consequence of women having control over their own bodies kicked those date parlor doors closed, ripped up those destination slips, put those ladies in Charlottesville with their white toast, teapots, and emery-board towels out of business forever."

Politics, race and social turmoil are, of course, an essential part of the Southern story. Frances is raised by a sympathetic nanny, and her grandfather blames the Kennedys, Jack and his "upstart fool" brother, for "nigras getting these big ideas. . . ." As "The Great Pretender," "Only the Lonely" and the theme from *A Summer Place* blare from the stereo, Mayes notices that half the freshman class has moved on because "the sense that an active world zoomed by the gates of the redbrick wall became too strong." She transfers to the University of Florida, stows away bottled water during the Cuban Missile Crisis, and meets beaus who might be marriage material. Frankye suffers a stroke and is confined to a nursing home, and Mayes arrives at a reconciliation with a troubled mother who had offered little more than constant beratings — and she gets on with her life, eventually writing best-sellers and settling near Hillsborough, North Carolina.

Readers who are accustomed to plot-driven narratives are likely to get lost in the beautiful verbiage of *Under Magnolia*. But Mayes' lyric touch — all those pages I defaced — make for compelling reading: "Because the land once soaked in blood remembers, we do, too," Mayes writes at the end of her memoir. "And there's a shared bond, too, of coming out of a place of unpredictable weather and terrain, a sun strong enough to melt your bones, a place where the second coming is still expected, where the night creatures sing the most soulful music that can be imagined."

We've all been there. Mayes makes us happy to go back.

Stephen E. Smith's most recent book of poems is A Short Report on the Fire at Woolworths. *He can be reached at travisses@hotmail.com*

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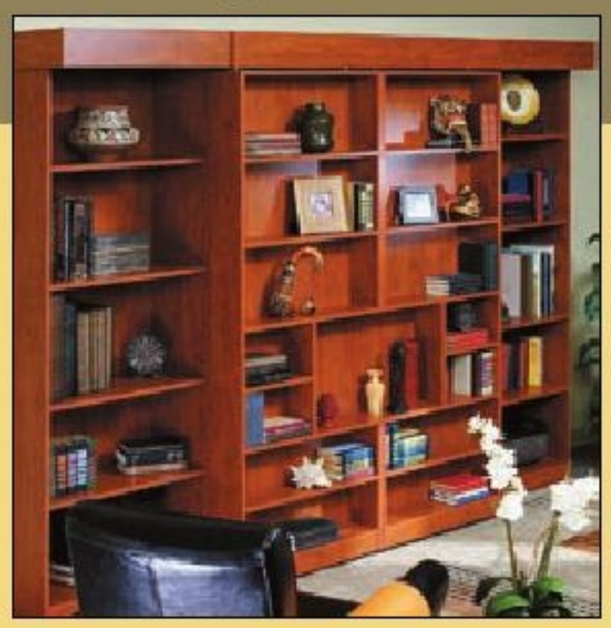

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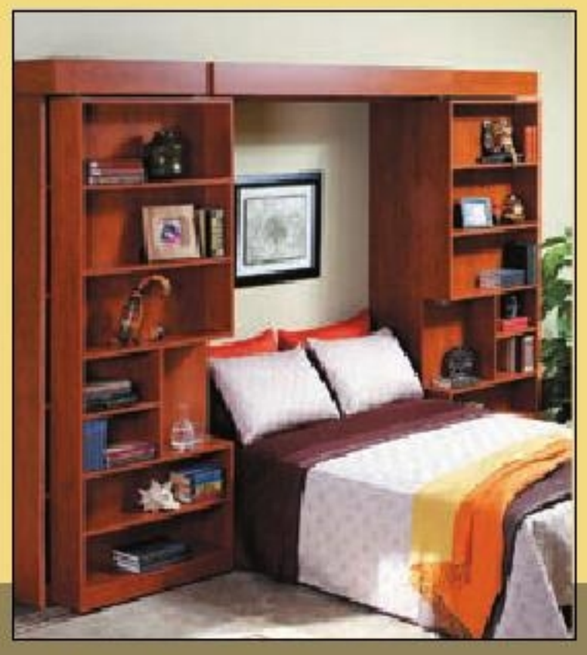

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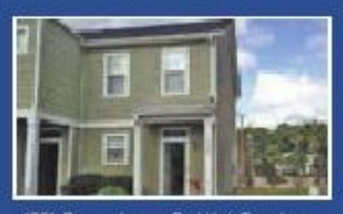

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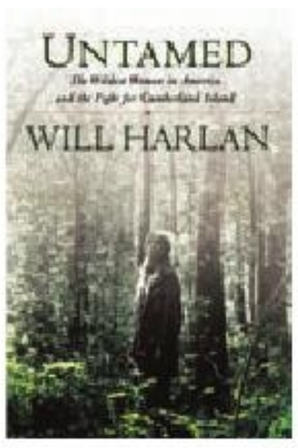
N.C. WRITER'S Notebook

By Sandra Redding

BOOKSTORE EVENTS

Books and summertime go together. – Lisa Schroeder

June 7 (Saturday, 10 a.m.) Scuppernong Books, Greensboro. Dori Jalazo, Triad author and illustrator of *One's Own Self*, a book for all ages, will discuss creativity, read, then invite those attending to share feelings about her powerful story. scuppernongbooks.com.

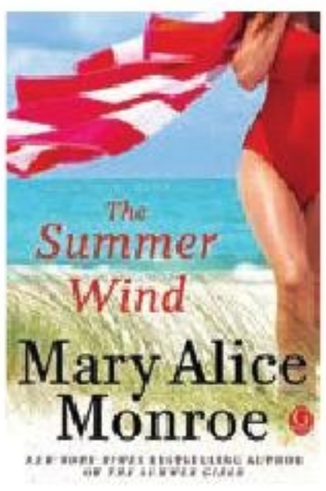


June 9 (Monday, 7 p.m.) Barnes & Noble, Greensboro. Award-winning journalist, editor and long-distance runner Will Harlan will read from *Untamed: The Wildest Woman in America and the Fight for Cumberland Island*. Harlan spent nineteen years researching Carol Ruckdeschel, the remarkable woman who fought the Carnegie family and the National Park Service to save turtles. store-locator.barnesandnoble.com/store/2795.

June 14 (Saturday, 11 a.m.) McIntyre's Books, Pittsboro. Monica Byrne's *The Girl in the Road*, set in a dystopic near future, is a stunning debut novel. Peter Mock, the bookstore's savvy book buyer, has high praise: "I've never read a novel quite like this, and I'm looking forward to hand-selling the heck out of it." www.fearrington.com/village-shops/mcintyres-books/

June 14 (Saturday, 11 a.m.) The Country Bookshop, Southern Pines. Karen White's *A Long Time Gone*. A wonferful ladies' summer read.

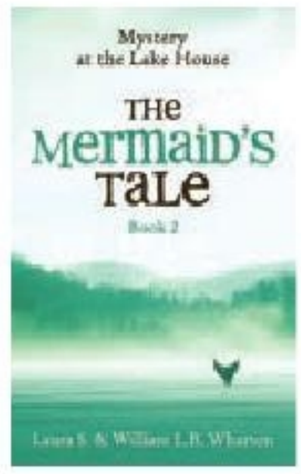
June 18 (Wednesday, 4:30 p.m.) The Country Bookshop, Southern Pines. Nan Chase and DeNeice Guest with *Drinking the Harvest: Making and Preserving Juices, Wines, Meads, Teas, and Ciders.*



June 27 (Friday, 6 p.m.) Quarter Moon Books, Topsail Island Beach. Fans of best-selling author Mary Alice Monroe will enjoy wine and cheese as Monroe reads from *The Summer Wind*, the second novel of her *Lowcountry Summer* trilogy. Filled with captivating characters, this just-released book chronicles the sad plight of wild dolphins. quartermoonbooks.com/

You have to write the book that wants to be written. And if the book will be too difficult for grown-ups, then write for children. –Madeleine L'Engle

Summer's here and the reading is easy – especially for children who, admit it or not, will miss the book connection school provides. Here are just a few options for filling that void:



· Laura S. Wharton co-wrote *The Mermaid's Tale* with her son, William Wharton. Set in Seven Lakes (near Pinehurst), this absorbing mystery includes an interview with Mermaid Linden (Linda Wolbert), a performer with Mermaids in Motion. Great way for kids 8–12 to learn about ocean conservation and meet a mermaid with a big heart. www.laurawhartonbooks.com.

· Writing about what she knows is JoAnn Bryson's plan. Brevard, where she lives, is a sanctuary for white squirrels. Inspired by those rare and bushy-tailed critters, she made them the heroes in her books for young children. Last May, Bryson introduced her latest, *Prissy and the Little Squirrel Rescue the Calf*, at Brevard's White Squirrel Festival. Find her books at the White Squirrel Shoppe in Brevard. www.whitesquirrelshoppe.com.

· Carlene Morton of Mebane, an avid reader and author of two published children's books, was a librarian before retiring. She now writes whimsical stories and transforms used books into one-of-a-kind art. In 2013, Morton's altered book creation, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, won Best of Show in the art competition Alamance Reads From Your Point of View. carlenemorton.com.

· John Claude Bemis, a popular writer from Hillsborough, brings passion for music, folklore and spinning tales to his novels for young people. Named 2013 Piedmont Laureate, the guitar-playing Bemis combines picking and grinning to his lively book promotions. *The Nine Pound Hammer*, first novel of his *Clockwork Dark* trilogy, won an N. C. Award for Juvenile Literature. From September 8–11, Bemis will teach a Table Rock workshop, Writing for Children and Young Adults, at Wildacres in Little Switzerland. Registration: tablerockwriters.com.

"I'm asked if I think universities stifle writers . . . They don't stifle enough of them. There's many a bestseller that could have been prevented by a good teacher."
–Flannery O'Connor

North Carolina has three fine universities, located in Chapel Hill, Wilmington and Greensboro, that offer excellent creative writing programs taught by revered authors. Vallie Lynn Watson, author of *A River so Long*, taught two fiction classes at UNCW last spring. "I'd never studied nor taught in a Fine Arts program; now I want to be a student all over again!" she says. "Rich classes like book-building, publishing and novel writing shape students for a variety of careers." Through UNCG's Write-On Greensboro, four MFA students offer free workshops to nonprofits and schools. The result: *Mirages I Have Seen: A Community Anthology of Write-On Greensboro, 2014*. Just released at Scuppernong Books on April 27, the anthology contains work by class participants. "If the world was composed of thoughtful writers, the world would be better composed," observes E. D. Edwards, director of UNCG's Center for Creative Writing in the Arts.

July 31 is the deadline for Press 53's Award for an Outstanding Poetry Collection. The prize includes publication and a $1,000 cash advance. Complete details at www.Press 53.com.

Got book news? Send details to sanredd@earthlink.net.

Bookstores and organizations, if you have a major event, let us know. Writers, if you have published a book in 2014, we want to hear about it.

Greensboro writer Sandra Redding's novel, Naomi Wise: A Cautionary Tale, *is a riveting story about heartbreak and hope in the 18th century Quaker community of Deep River. Email her at sanredd@earthlink.net.*

World Explorer Does Lunch

At the redoubtable Causeway Café, Royal Geographical Society fellow Julian Monroe Fisher comes home and digs in

By Dana Sachs

When explorer Julian Monroe Fisher and I were deciding where to meet for lunch in the Wilmington area, he said he was up for anything, but maybe not the Asian spot that specializes in bowls of noodles. "I have just returned from an expedition in South Sudan and Uganda," explained Monroe, who goes by his middle name, "and while in the bush I lived off freeze-dried noodles."

To avoid anything that resembled instant ramen, then, we settled on Causeway Café, the popular Wrightsville Beach spot where the menu is noodle-free. The diner, just over the first bridge and close enough to Redix that you can run over and buy a beach chair while you wait for your waffles, is all-American. But when Monroe, a raconteur in a wide-brimmed Indiana Jones hat, described a ride across Africa in a Toyota Land Cruiser, an AK-47 tucked at his feet, I saw vistas of endless savannah.

Monroe is a Fellow with the Royal Geographical Society in London and an International Fellow with The Explorer's Club in New York City. An online article in *National Geographic* calls his work "meticulously researched for historical accuracy." He is currently in the middle of a five-year, seven-expedition project to retrace the overland routes of a group of late 19th century Victorian Age explorers. In South Sudan, he's been putting up educational placards along one historic 500-mile route, trying to attract development and tourists to a region devastated by conflict. "The idea is to use this trail to get the economy going for these people," he said. "They need the world to think of South Sudan as something besides war." That need has become more acute, and the challenge even harder, as the country slips into civil war, with increasingly tragic consequences for local people.

Earlier this year, Monroe and his family moved to Wilmington from Vienna, Austria. Though his wife, Gina, is Austrian, Monroe grew up in the mountain town of Banner Elk and graduated from Appalachian State with a degree in anthropology. After college, he says, "There was no money for a Ph.D. in anthropology," so he began a career in ski industry sales and marketing. Then, in 1995, Monroe's father died of cancer and he began to ask himself a serious question: "Where is my life going to be?" Within a year, he had "sold everything and bought a ticket to Cancun." Before leaving, though, he called a radio station in Charlotte and, using his talents in sales, pitched a novel idea: For the cost of accepting long-distance collect calls, the radio station could receive regular on-air updates from Monroe about his travels. The radio station liked the proposal and Monroe subsequently found sponsorship from Mast General Stores, who paid for the trip in return for on-air acknowledgment. For the next seven years, checking in from pay phones in teeming cities, mountain hamlets and remote fishing villages, Monroe circled the globe, making call-in appearances on a popular syndicated "drive time" radio show, describing the world as he experienced it. "They never knew," he told me, "where I would be calling from."

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES STEFIUK

By 2003, Monroe felt ready for a new challenge. He and Gina, whom he had met on his travels, had begun their family and were living in Vienna. Monroe contacted one of his former professors at Appalachian State and said that he'd like to get back into anthropology. "You have two choices," he remembers the professor telling him. "You can either get a Ph.D. or you can do something called 'Personal Anthropology,'" which, in a nutshell, meant enacting his own research projects. Monroe chose the latter, which led to the expeditions.

While Monroe talked about this transition in his life, plates of Southern down-home cooking began to arrive at our table. He had ordered the fresh flounder platter, a large portion of crisp-fried fish atop a mountain of spiced French fries and hushpuppies. In front of me sat a plate of Eggs Neptune, the Causeway's version of Eggs Benedict, which substitutes crabmeat for Canadian bacon, layering it over English muffins with sliced tomato, poached eggs and Hollandaise sauce. With such rich atmospherics, you might expect to miss the taste of the crab, but the seafood holds its own, bringing to the dish an unusually complex flavor.

"What do you think about the fish?" I asked.

"Very good," Monroe said, but he seemed distracted by the array of dishes that now covered our table — a plate of luscious and surprisingly delicate fried green tomatoes, a tasty (and comparatively healthy) grilled tuna sandwich, and sides of hash browns, tomatoes and cucumbers, and tangy coleslaw. "It's that new diet," he said, "you eat until you can't eat any more."

We also tried one of the Causeway's famous waffles, this one filled with chocolate chips, slathered in whipped cream and topped with fresh fruit. After so many years abroad, the cuisine of American brunch seemed baffling to the explorer. "Would people eat a waffle for lunch?" he asked.

Apparently, re-acclimation to the American lifestyle brings culture shock in various forms. "I didn't have an American driver's license," Monroe said. "I didn't have credit — I don't mean I had bad credit. I had no credit at all. I've been off the radar for years." This long-term absence from American society has created grueling bureaucratic challenges to ordinary activities like buying a house. That morning, after a lot of effort, he had finally succeeded in getting a driver's license, but not without some anxious moments. "I couldn't sleep last night," he said. "I find it easier going into the streets of Juba, South Sudan, during a coup than going into the DMV."

Monroe and his family love Wilmington, though. They picked the city because an urban quality-of-life website gave it high ratings. "Vienna is a beautiful place," he told me, "but we wanted a dog, a yard, a beach." Their new home is right on the cross-city bike trail, and he can ride to Wrightsville Beach, he told me, "in seventeen minutes." Their yard is dog-ready.

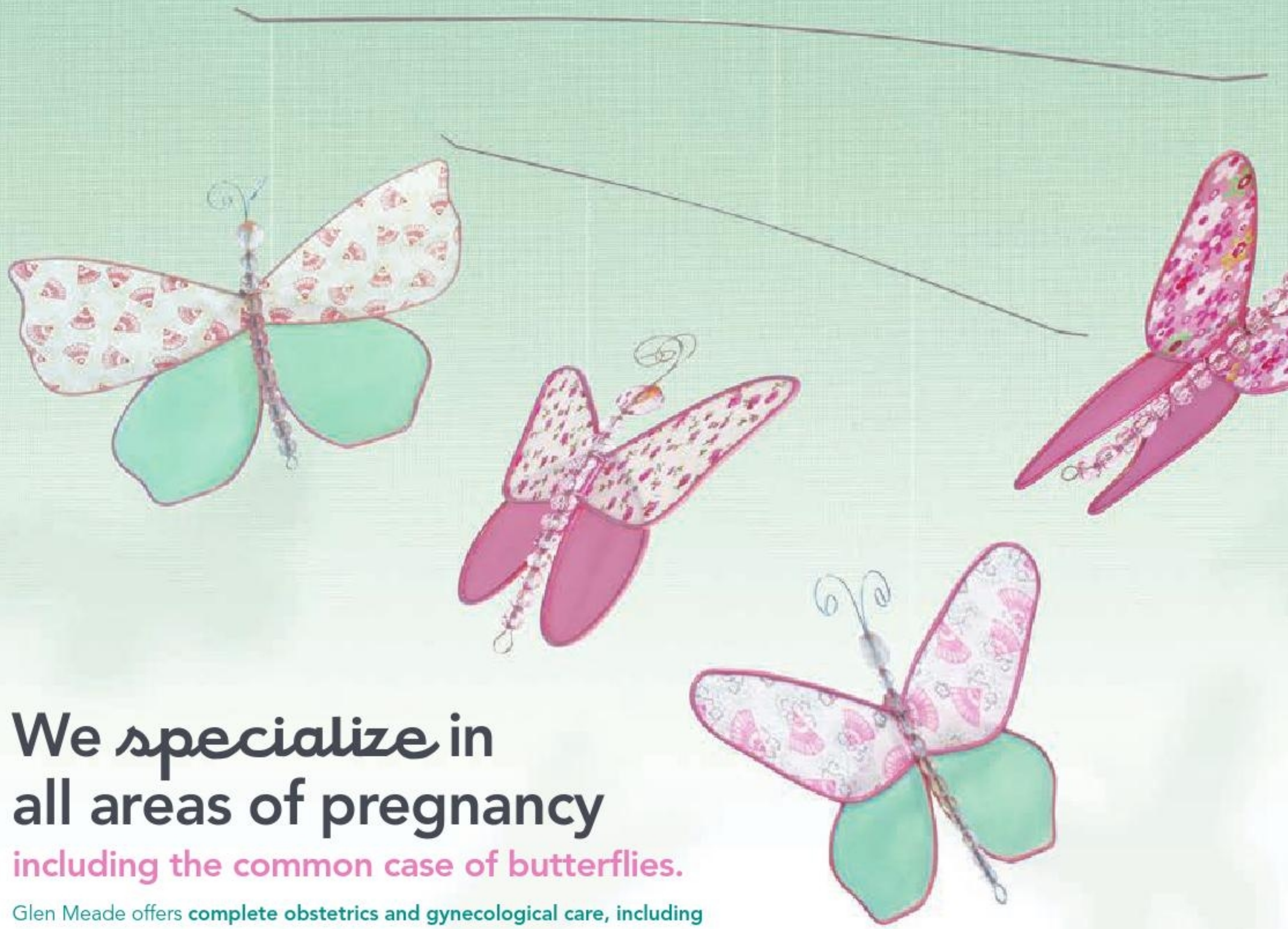
Monroe and Gina are starting a business focused on "education, conservation and preservation through exploration," right here in the Carolinas. "When people find out what I do, they say they're living vicariously through me, but you don't have to go to Africa to explore. Look in your own backyard: the rivers, the inlets, the islands. There's a lot here."

Not that he's abandoning his work in Africa. "When I'm there," he told me, "I feel anything is possible. It's got a rhythm. Everything is on the move. Your senses are overwhelmed. I get up with the birds there." Earlier this year, he and his 13-year-old son, Charley, traveled through Uganda together for three weeks. The most gratifying moment of the whole trip might have occurred after they got back, though. Walking through Independence Mall in Wilmington one day, Monroe heard Charley say to his mom, "When we were in Africa . . ."

Monroe thought, "He got it."

Causeway Café is open for breakfast and lunch from 6 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. every day. For more information, call (910) 256-3730 or visit www.causewaycafewb.com. If you're interested in joining one of Julian Monroe Fisher's international or local expeditions, you can contact him through www.carolinarivers.com.

Dana Sachs' latest novel, The Secret of the Nightingale Palace, *is available at bookstores throughout Wilmington.*



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Papa Got It Right

Nothing beats the heat like the cool, perfect daiquiri

By Frank Daniels III

I love the new —

new golf clubs, new shotguns, new iPhones, new Macs, new tools, new cars, new restaurants, new books. It's not that I dislike the old, or do not appreciate the timeless, but I suffer little angst about change and certainly do not pine for the past. But I also have come to enjoy the way new things, new ideas, new experiences enable me to see old things in new ways, so that old can become new again as my perception and experience open new patterns.

Summer is a great time for revisiting some of the old, and seeing it with new eyes and hands and taste buds. Like most folks, I was desultory about the required reading of classics, but in recent summers, I have put some classics on my reading stand (or more recently in my e-reader.) My recent jag has been picking up Hemingway again. Very humbling.

It is a reasonable goal to have a drink in every bar Papa Hemingway frequented (I hope I live a long time), as he drank in some great places. He had a hand in popularizing some of the classic cocktails, and invented a few as well, including my favorite, Death in the Gulfstream, as a hangover cure for marlin fishing after a rough night.

And from his time in Cuba, we can resurrect one of the great, mistreated cocktails, the daiquiri.

Simple, excellent, perfect for the heat.

David Embury, author of the definitive book on cocktails, *The Fine Art of Mixing Drinks* (a splendid bar fly's read published first in 1948), says, "The original and correct recipe for the daiquiri is stated in terms of a single cocktail as teaspoonful of sugar, juice of half a lime, and one jigger of white rum. This is a cocktail that is difficult to improve upon. It is dry, yet smooth. The reaction time is short. The lime and rum blend perfectly. The daiquiri, like the old-fashioned, deserves an even greater popularity than it now enjoys. . ."

You don't see many daiquiris made that way today; frozen, fruity sugar bombs have replaced the simple formula perfected by arguably the finest bartender of the 20th century, Constantino Ribalaigua Vert, master barman at El Floridita in Havana.

As always in these classic cocktails, the ingredients are essential. Fresh lime juice, squeezed by hand or with a simple-squeeze juicer, fine sugar and, of course, excellent white rum. Finding good white rum may be the hardest part. I find Bacardi's aftertaste unpleasant, but I have found an excellent white rum from a Tennessee distiller, Prichard's, that gets close to the flavor of a Cuban rum (which you can get in Canada), very good! Unfortunately, you'll have to sample several to find your favorite. Darn.

Hemingway spent a lot of time at El Floridita in Constantino's bar and the barman made up a variation of his classic daiquiri for him, the Papa Doble, or "Papa's Double." Lore goes that Hemingway did not like sugar in his drinks and Constantino obliged with a tailored version, substituting maraschino liqueur for sugar and adding fresh grapefruit juice (the bar notes I've read are that the Cuban grapefruit he used is fairly sweet, so adding a touch of sugar shouldn't violate Papa's memory).

It is interesting how new and refreshing this old, timeless cocktail is.

Enjoy.

Original Daiquiri

Constantino Ribalaigua Vert's recipe from El Floridita in Havana.

1 1/2 oz White rum
1 oz Simple syrup
3/4 oz Fresh lime juice

Mix the three ingredients in a chilled cocktail shaker. Shake vigorously and strain into a chilled cocktail glass.

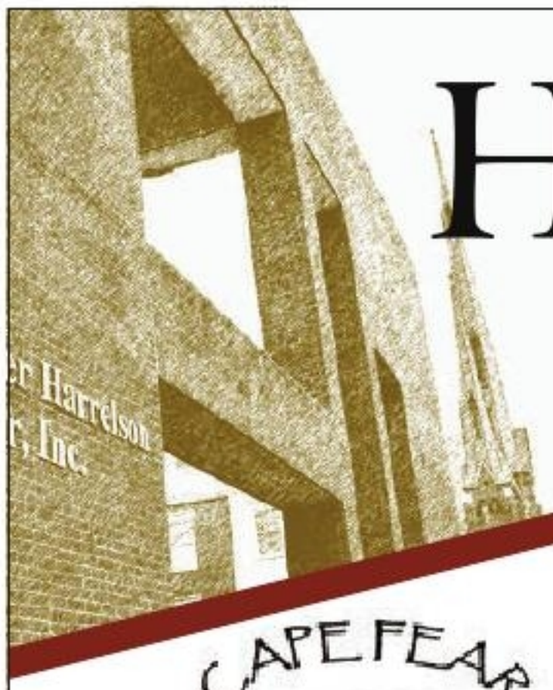
Papa Doble (Hemingway Daiquiri)

1 1/2 oz White rum
1/4 oz Maraschino liqueur
1/2 oz Fresh grapefruit juice
3/4 oz Fresh lime juice
3/4 oz Simple syrup or 1/2 teaspoon fine sugar

Mix all the ingredients in a chilled cocktail shaker. Shake vigorously and strain into a chilled cocktail glass.

Frank Daniels III is an editor and writer living in Nashville, Tennessee, who frequently visits Wilmington. Contact him at fdanielsiii@mac.com.

PHOTOGRAPH BY HANNAH SHARPE



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Pong-Fu Throwdown

Thanks to the growing Wilmington Table Tennis Club, ping-pong has emerged from the family garage and church basement. The action is fast and furious – and for everyone

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES STEFIUK

By Jason Frye

The room sounds like this: thwack-tack-thwock, thwack-tack-thwock — ten times over. After a dizzying moment, the rhythm takes over and the sound echoes back down from the high ceiling, adding to itself, building a sort of dissonant fugue, like a metronome suffering from neurosis. But there is a sort of music to it. And if you look around, you'll see people dancing.

Here, the shaggy-haired youth, bouncing on the balls of his feet, a shock of hair following the beat a second too late. There, a mother and son, moving in a synchronous twist — one extends and the other turns away, then it reverses, then back to the start and again. Finally, the military men, playing serious, close to the table, paddle-a-streak-of-color, laser-accurate shot table tennis.

This is the scene when the Wilmington Table Tennis Club gets together for a showdown, a tournament or a friendly bout of pong-fu sparring. Throughout the year, you'll find one hundred or more table tennis aficionados gathering at spaces like the Brooklyn Arts Center for the Port City Ping-Pong Throwdown. Occasionally, the Wilmington Table Tennis Club puts together a cash tournament at spots like Banks Channel Pub. On the regular, you'll find a core contingent at the Myrtle Grove Presbyterian Church, where they gather every Friday evening (barring a church event) for a spectacular display of ping-pong mastery.

And I mean spectacular.

Take the guy who can solve a Rubik's cube in under forty-five seconds; play any instrument you put in his hands; and open up a can of whoop-ass on a dance floor, tennis court or ping-pong table. He plays here occasionally. If you ask him, "Who's the best in the room?" he won't say that he is, he'll point to someone else, someone who, like him, plays backed away from the table and with a blur of the paddle sends the ball streaking across the net.

At the tournaments, the competition varies. At one table you'll find a young couple, giggling in love, playfully swatting the ball back and forth; he grins when she misses the table and she shrieks when he slams the ball as hard as he can (and misses the corner of the table, naturally). At the next table are two uniformed gents down from Fort Bragg. And I don't mean

military garb. They're in their U.S. Army Table Tennis Team uniforms: short shorts and a sweat-wicking, tight-fitting shirt emblazoned with logos. These dudes are serious business.

One table over, you see an old man, his white hair a halo around his head, playing a young Asian woman. She's fast, aggressive, makes little sounds as she shuffles back and forth, striking the ball back across the table with ferociously fast twists. Forehand, backhand, forehand, backhand, she returns shot after shot, her eyes intense, beads of sweat like jewels on her forehead. Her opponent, the white-haired gent, plays with effortless grace. When he moves to return her shot, it looks like he's going to be late — every time you think he'll miss it — then, at the last moment, his arm extends, his paddle turns over, and the ball goes back across the table.

He hasn't broken a sweat.

"That guy, with the white hair, he's one of the best. A former champion. He schools just about every person he plays," says Laurence Nadeau, the president of the Wilmington Table Tennis Club (WTTC) and emcee at most events.

Over the last couple of years, WTTC has grown. At least they've come out of the rec room and into the public eye with the Port City Throwdown, Pong Fu Fridays at the Presbyterian Church, and their semi-regular tournaments.

As fun as the Friday games are, the Throwdown, which filled the floor of the Brooklyn Arts Center and crowded the walls and balcony with onlookers holding their winter coats, is something to experience. The people there surprise you — a mousy mom may take her teenage sons and his friends to task using years of skills finely honed in one of her girlfriends' garage-turned-teenage-hangout; or the gawky tween who doesn't look like he could tie his own shoes without falling over moves with Fred Astaire fluidity once he has the paddle in his hands — but the enthusiasm for the sport surprises you more.

From my perch in the balcony, I watched match after match. Soon, one table captured everyone's attention. Lengthy volleys (some that lasted longer than entire games I've played), long shots screaming low across the net, high arcing lobs that moved the opponent even farther off the table slowed the rhythm that greeted me when I walked in the door. The thwack-tack-thwock that echoed from table to table to ceiling to wall and surrounded me clarified and became singular. Thwack, pause because the ball's fall has slowed, tack, it comes careening off the table, thwock, it moves back in a blur. The rhythm slows and slows, but it's mesmerizing all the same.

Jason Frye is a travel writer and author of Moon North Carolina and Moon NC Coast. *He's a barbecue judge, he rarely naps, and he's always on the road. Keep up with his travels at tarheeltourist.com.*

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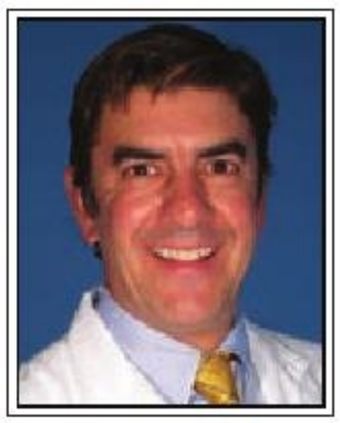

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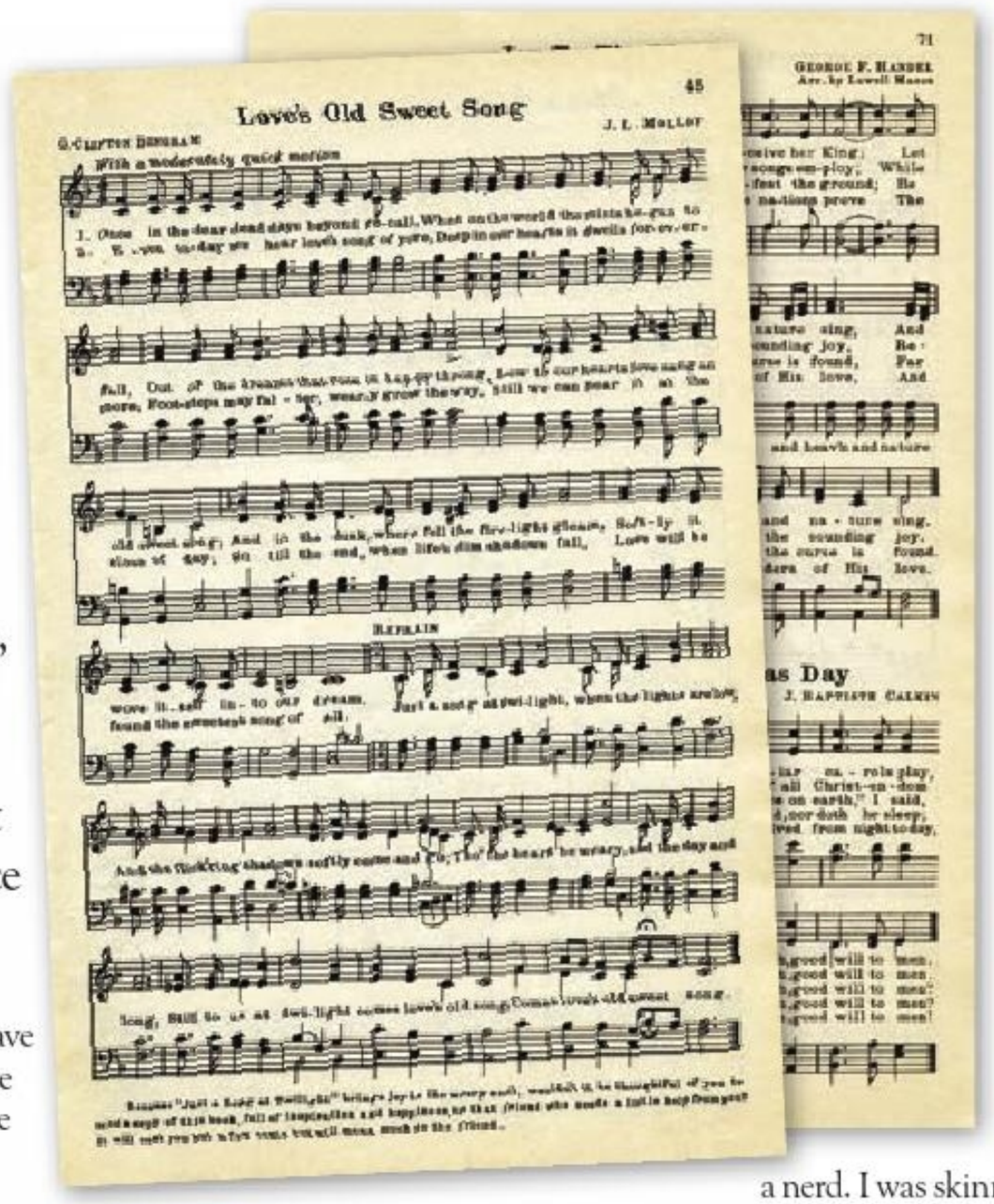
Song for Miss Annie

The small-town chorus teacher who made a difference



By Bill Thompson

You hear a lot of talk today about making a difference. Most of the time it is about doing something in the future, something positive, something new. That's good and I'm all for it, but sometimes we forget to look at what made a positive difference in the past.

In keeping with my personal slogan "Everything in the world is personal," I have to look at the past through my own private lens at those people who made a difference in my life and, certainly, in the lives of so many of my contemporaries.

If we asked one hundred people to name the most influential people in their lives, I bet almost every one of them would include a teacher on the list . . . probably more than one teacher. That would certainly be the case for me.

From first grade until high school graduation, I went to the same school in Hallsboro, North Carolina. It was in a small, rural community where you had the same classmates every year. It was rare to meet a new student, rarer for someone to leave. I had some of the same teachers my mother had when she went to school there. One of those teachers was Miss Annie Elkins.

Through the years, Miss Annie taught various levels of English, but she taught music to everybody . . . every year. She taught in the classroom and she also directed the school chorus. There was a chorus for everybody. In high school, we had Glee Club.

Glee Club was nothing like the chorus you see on *Glee*, the Fox television series. Our glee club was much more formal, much more structured, much more "dignified." Dignity was a big concept as far as Miss Annie was concerned. All of the choral groups rehearsed and performed on risers. There was no talking during rehearsals and certainly no choreography. We didn't even move to the rhythm of the music!

The music we sang was traditional, even classical, much of it religious and a lot of it patriotic. When we learned a new song, Miss Annie would make mimeographed copies of the music. (For those who don't know about mimeographs, look it up. I'll never forget how the ink smelled.) She tried to teach us the basics of how to read music but usually we just sang the parts over and over until we got it like she wanted it. The only printed music I remember, other than an occasional piece with piano accompaniment, was *The Golden Song Book of Favorite Songs.*

The songbook wasn't just for chorus. Back then, we had a general assembly at least once a week when every student filed into the auditorium where the principal would say a prayer, the student body would pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, sing a song from the *Golden Song Book* and listen to a short speech from somebody. I don't remember the speeches but I remember the prayer and the pledge and the songs.

And Miss Annie Elkins was there, a part of that, every school day for the twelve years I was there.

Now, here's the personal part. All through school I was what would now be considered a nerd. I was skinny, wore glasses and had a very noticeable overbite. I made good grades but I was too small to play athletics, so I was the scorekeeper and the "stringer" for the local newspaper. My singular distinction was my voice. Even when I was little, I sang. Miss Annie thought I had a good voice so she would spend extra time working with me. She would assign solos to me and I would always sing in ensembles. And when we had school plays, she always made sure I was involved in the music. Her special attention gave me confidence and self-esteem that I would have never had otherwise.

I never attained fame or fortune in the music field, but I was fortunate enough to appear at a wide range of venues over the years either as a speaker, master of ceremonies or performer, all of which allowed me to use the musical talents that Miss Annie honed so early on.

One of those venues was the outdoor stage on the floor of Palo Duro Canyon in the Texas panhandle. I was honored to sing there with the Amarillo Symphony Orchestra in a tribute to North Carolina playwright Paul Green. I remember looking out from that stage over the audience at that spectacular canyon on a late autumn afternoon, the sun shining on the rim, the sky a cloudless blue, a soft breeze blowing, a full symphony orchestra behind me, and thinking, "Oh, how I wish Miss Annie could see me now!"

She made a difference.

Bill Thompson is a speaker and author who lives just down the road, in nearby Hallsboro.

"Goat Gland" Brinkley

The doctor who had a cure for everything but quackery

By Nan Graham

Dr. John R. Brinkley:

charlatan, huckster, mountebank, murderer, as well as the "undisputed king of American quacks." According to the author of *Great American Eccentrics*, no flimflam man before or after him has made such fortune or developed such fame and power. Born in 1885 in the mountain backwoods near Beta, North Carolina, Brinkley built his empire on what we may delicately call "male insecurity." His unique cure for the male malady pre-dated Viagra by seventy-plus years.

In the 1920s and '30s, Brinkley, shyster peddler of distilled colored water guaranteed to restore "manly vigor" at $25 a pop, recognized the opportunity in this particular field. He earned his M.D. diploma from the Eclectic Medical University of Kansas City . . . as one wag quipped: "the old-fashioned way. He bought it."

He set up housekeeping with his second wife (he was a bigamist for several years, having overlooked the detail of his existing wife and children in Canada) and opened the Brinkley Clinic in Milford, Kansas. It was in Milford that an aging Kansas farmer gave him the idea that was to make him rich . . . and notorious. The million-dollar scheme? Transplanting goat glands into the farmer with a sagging libido in the hope that the transplant would restore his "pep" and cure his "low T."

Rejuvenation was a hot topic at the onset of the Roaring Twenties, as it is now. The farmer's harebrained notion was definitely worth a try. In 1918, Brinkley removed the glands of a young lusty Toggenburg billy goat and transplanted them into the optimistic neighbor. Two weeks after the operation, the jubilant farmer reported his sex drive and vigor remarkably recovered. It was every aging Lothario's dream.

Word of the successful goat gland operation spread throughout the state of Kansas and, eventually, all over the country . . . and beyond. Brinkley offered the operation in his Brinkley Clinic, now expanded to include a few other diploma mill doctors. Brinkley's new wife, Minnie, worked closely with the doctor, assisting in operations a mere two weeks after receiving her nursing degree from her husband's alma mater, via the U.S. Postal Service.

The good doctor did not overlook women patients. Other surgeries transplanting goat ovaries into female patients "guaranteed sexual rejuvenation, improved busts and the disappearance of wrinkles," writes biographer Pope Brock.

Patients at the rejuvenation clinic even got to choose, from the adjacent pasture, their own billy goat from which the glands would be taken — something akin, I guess, to selecting your lobster for your entrée in a restaurant.

Soon the charlatan was known nationally by his catchy nicknames, "Goat Gland Brinkley" or "Baa Baa Brinkley." His slogan, "Just let me get your goat and you'll be Mr. Ram-What-Am with every lamb," was surefire advertising, adding fuel to the hype of restored sexual vigor.

Business was brisk. Patients flocked to his clinic from across the globe: California, Europe, India and Idaho. Over 5,000 operations performed for the bargain price of $750 cash per transplant (over $10,000 in today's money), at the rate of 500 operations a month. From his newly purchased radio station, KFKB, the prosperous Dr. Brinkley advertised his own patent medicines as well as his operation. He actually prescribed over the radio. Listeners wrote in their symptoms, and Brinkley prescribed a tonic or herbal remedy for them, all concocted and sold by the doctor himself, of course. His eclectic radio programming included country music with the famous Carter family trio, French lessons, yodelers, fundamentalist preachers, and his own lectures on revitalizing the aging male. Young Johnny Cash in Arkansas first heard his future wife, 10-year-old little June Carter, sing over Brinkley's Border Buster radio station XERA.

Medical expertise aside, John Romulus Brinkley, newly minted as John Richard Brinkley (the doctor considered Romulus lacked gravitas), was something of an early mass marketing and media genius. He touted his clinic, which had expanded its expertise from transplants to prostate makeovers and female procedures claiming to awaken the housewife's libido plus his patent medicines. The airwaves were buzzing. Mass mailings and billboards spread word of the sensational surgeries and medical miracles of the huckster to an eager public.

The "Milford Messiah," as author Pope Brock calls him, quickly became

a millionaire. Pictures taken of Brinkley in his heyday reveal a mild-mannered, small man with eyeglasses and a well-clipped goatee, which may have served as a visual reminder of the source of his patients' sexual renaissance. His was the reassuring look of a modest and button-down medical wizard, and certainly not of a wild-eyed carney barker.

Appearances belie the reality of the lifestyle of Dr. and Mrs. Brinkley. The wealthy quack was living large and making friends in high places. Mansions, automobiles, extravagant jewelry for Minnie and a private plane. He hobnobbed with the Duke and Duchess of Windsor and even rented Wallis and Edward one of his three yachts, named Dr. Brinkley I, Dr. Brinkley II and Dr. Brinkley III, according to biographer Brock. Politics beckoned. What better place to marry Brinkley's snake oil rhetoric, money and the media? A modern ménage á trois.

He ran for governor of Kansas three times, barely losing out to Alf Landon in the second race. Moving to Arkansas, he commuted from Little Rock to Mexico, where he operated his clinic and his over-the-border radio station unimpeded by medical or government surveillance.

Eventually even his old customers abandoned him, lawsuits against him for wrongful death multiplied like mushrooms, and the Mexican government seized his XERA radio station. His medical theories and politics had become a laughingstock. The days of Elmer Gantry-like con games were over.

Brinkley died of a heart attack at the premature age of 56, three million dollars in debt. He is remembered with a North Carolina historical highway marker whose text kindly calls him a "medical maverick, radio and advertising pioneer, and candidate for governor of Kansas." Brinkley would appreciate that sly dodge about his career of medical chicanery.

Marking his gravesite in a dignified Memphis cemetery: an outstanding life-sized bronze "winged victory" atop a marble column. The "victory" previously enhanced the doctor's front yard in Del Rio, Texas, surrounded by flashing colored lights, water features, a small zoo and loudspeakers, which played music from the pipe organ inside Brinkley's apple green mansion.

And about that farmer who was the original inspiration and recipient of the very first goat gland operation? A year after his transplant, Brinkley's patient fathered a strapping ten-pound son whom he promptly named . . . what else? Billy.

Nan Graham is a frequent contributor to Salt *Magazine.*

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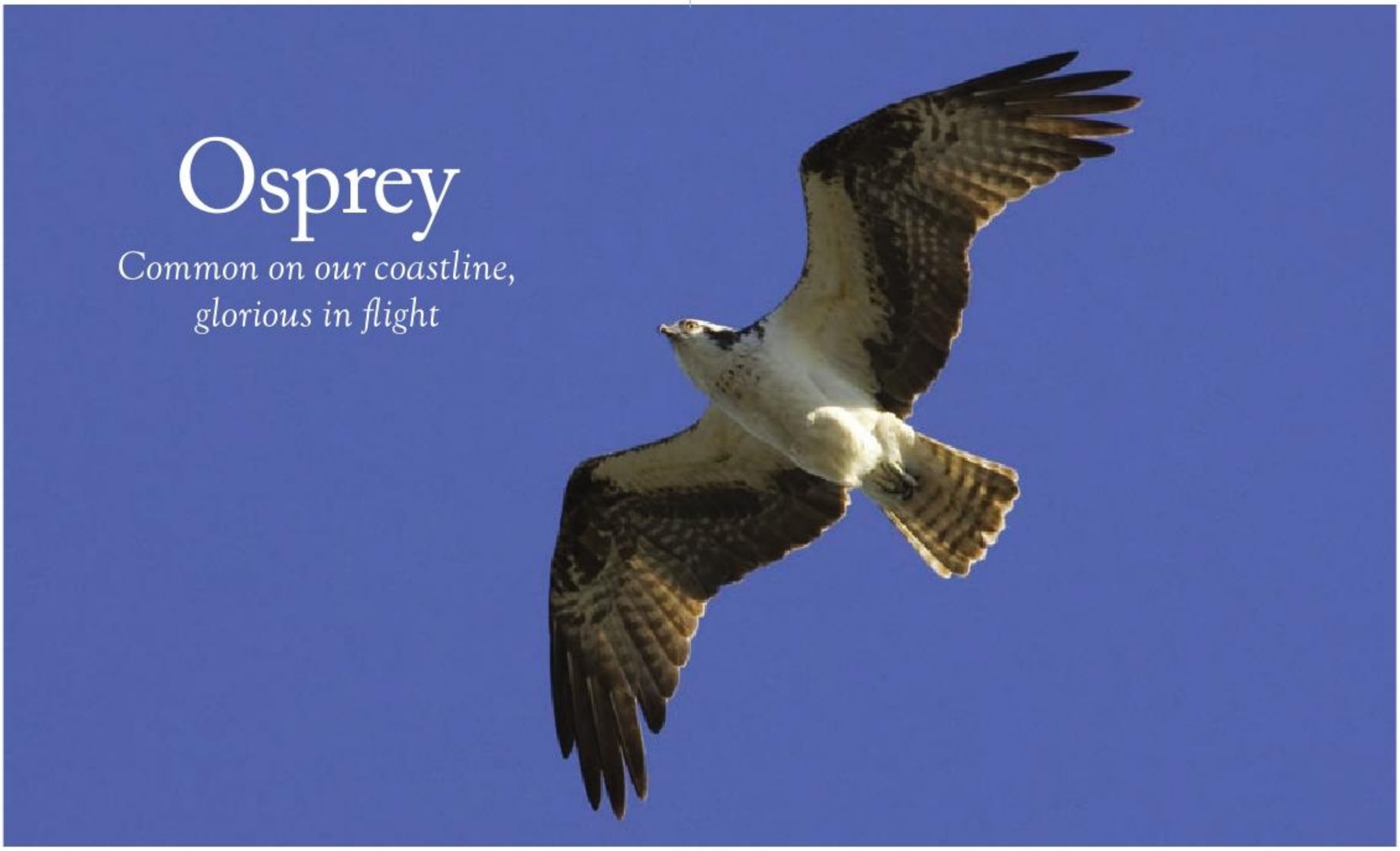
Osprey

Common on our coastline, glorious in flight



By Susan Campbell

Very large birds flying high in the sky tend to get people's attention, even people who aren't birdwatchers. Here in North Carolina, a number of big birds can be seen — from considerable distance — soaring along our coastline. One of the biggest is the fish hawk, officially known as the osprey.

Although osprey are sometimes mistaken for eagles, also found in wet habitat, they look nothing alike. Even at a great distance, their flight profiles are distinctly different. Eagles have large, broad wings, held flat while soaring. Osprey, on the other hand, have long narrow wings, crooked at the wrist. As a result of lower wing loading, the fish hawk must flap its wings more frequently. And while they do have a degree of pale feathering on their heads, their head and bill are nowhere near as massive as those of an eagle. Furthermore, osprey have a dark tail and pale underwing linings, which are unmistakable when viewed from below.

As you may have already guessed, these big birds thrive on live fish, both saltwater and freshwater species. And a meal can be anything the bird can carry. Osprey watch for prey from high perches or by flying slowly above the water's surface. They also have the ability to hover for short periods of time as they zero in on a potential meal. Only two other birds, the hummingbird and the kingfisher, are capable of this specialized behavior. When they are ready, osprey actually dive into the water to grab the fish they are after. And yes, their flight style was the inspiration for the famous Marine Corps aircraft of the same name.

Not only are these birds conspicuous in flight, but their nests are likely to get your attention as well. They are huge, stick-built affairs — sometimes several feet across — constructed on vertical surfaces in the open and over water. Man-made platforms can be erected for osprey but there are plenty of structures they will use in coastal areas, such as channel markers, pilings or communication towers. Of course, they will also take advantage of dead or dying trees, setting up housekeeping in the uppermost branches. If they successfully fledge young in a particular location, females will return to the same nest year after year, adding more materials to the structure every season. Given the fact that osprey live decades, their nests can become massive.

There are a number of osprey nests around Wilmington. Along the Intracoastal Waterway, at Airlie Gardens (by the Bradley Creek boardwalk), at the end of Wrightsville Avenue in Wrightsville Beach (on the cell tower) are among the places you will likely spot a big pile of sticks with an adult osprey or two perched on top. If you're lucky, you may even glimpse a fuzzy white chick peering out over the edge. Both adults will be busy raising their family for the next few months. Come fall, they will head south, separately, to Central or South America. And while you may see a few osprey along our coast during the cooler months, they are likely migrants from farther north.

Our area is a terrific location for fish eaters of all kinds. So if a large powerful bird with M-shaped wings catches your eye, or if you hear a loud chirping coming from on high, take a closer look: It may well be an osprey.

Susan would love to receive your wildlife sightings and photos. She can be contacted by email at susan@ncaves.com, or by calling (910) 949-3207.

The Face of the River

Thanks to Kemp Burdette and the Cape Fear riverkeepers, someone is always keeping watch on Wilmington's most prized natural resource

By Virginia Holman

One recent Friday afternoon, I poached Kemp Burdette from his day job for a sunny day of john-boating on the Northeast Cape Fear River. Kemp's the Cape Fear Riverkeeper. You have likely seen him on MSNBC-TV or all over your Facebook feed. He's a fit, tan, dark-haired man with close-cropped silvering hair. He's not quite young enough to call young and not quite old enough to call youthful. He's at the top of the hill, as my neighbor likes to say of those not firmly in middle age. In addition, Kemp should be on top of the world. You see, Kemp's newly famous. Rachel Maddow discovered him shortly after he and a group of other riverkeepers released a shocking video of deliberate coal ash dumping in the Cape Fear River. Coming on the heels of the Dan River coal ash disaster, the footage shown on Rachel Maddow's program went viral, and Kemp was thrust into the national spotlight. Suddenly the entire world knew what many of us in the area have known for years: that in the coastal plain of North Carolina, much of our drinking water comes from the Cape Fear River and its tributaries, and that men like Kemp Burdette and organizations like the Cape Fear River Watch are at the forefront of protecting public health.

PHOTOGRAPH BY VIRGINIA HOLMAN

I've met a few riverkeepers in my day, and in my experience, they are not flashy people with out-of-control egos. In aggregate, riverkeepers are understated, smart enough not to let on just how frighteningly smart they are, pitbull tenacious, and relentlessly driven. Riverkeepers know the history of the communities they protect, and they are personally acquainted with those who make their living from the water. So far as I can tell, being a riverkeeper is akin to being both an environmental sheriff and good ol' boy. Riverkeepers don't carry badges, and I'm fairly certain they aren't issued a sidearm, but if one takes you out on the Northeast Cape Fear in his john boat, you can bet he's brought two important pieces of equipment: a machete and a laptop computer.

You might think that scheduling face time with a famous riverkeeper requires a have-your-people-call-my-people sort of arrangement. When I called to discuss a story about the Northeast Cape Fear River, he kindly offered to explore the river with me. So much for fame going to his head. Then he said four words that every wilderness freak longs to hear: black bears, bobcats, and bucks.

In 2013 Kemp's organization, Cape Fear River Watch, in conjunction with the North Carolina Coastal Federation and the Wildlands Network, received a $35,000 grant from wildlife conservationists Brad and Shelli Stanback to install and maintain twenty-four infrared wildlife cameras along the waterway. Most of the cameras are installed in areas only accessible by boat, and all are so well-concealed they are impossible to spot, even up close. "I am amazed by the images we've captured so far," said Kemp. "Bobcat especially. I've been fishing, camping and hunting in this area since I was a boy, and I have never, ever, seen a bobcat in the wild. But with the cameras, we've seen dozens out here."

Kemp and I head upriver from the Castle Hayne Boat Ramp. We cross under a bridge, and within minutes, the river corridor appears mostly uninhabited and wild, save for the looming towers of an old cement plant. Most people in the area are more familiar with the Cape Fear River than its tributary, the sensibly named Northeast Cape Fear River, known locally as "East Branch." The Northeast Cape Fear headwaters rise in Duplin County near Mount Olive. From there this blackwater waterway slides past the primevally beautiful Goshen Swamp, Angola Bay, Holly Shelter Game Land, and through the rural community of Castle Hayne. It joins the Cape Fear River north of downtown. More than likely you've simply noted this river as a landmark—

it's the last waterway you cross on I-40 South before you reach Wilmington. This elegant riparian corridor extends nearly 130 miles through bottomland hardwoods and cypress gum swamps, and alongside pristine upland forest.

Longtime North Carolina residents who follow the news know the Northeast Cape Fear has suffered mightily from a variety of industrial pollution over the last forty years — everything from hog waste lagoon spills to hydraulic fluid and oil and mercury have tainted the river. In addition, some of the aquifer near its banks in Castle Hayne has been polluted since the mid-1970s by a massive hexavalent chromium plume. (You may recognize the name. Hexavalent chromium is the same carcinogen featured in the film *Erin Brockovich*.) Since this plume poisoned the groundwater in the spill area, and since groundwater moves, the plume is kept in check by an elaborate system of wells and pumps, and will be in perpetuity. And you'd have to have been living under a rock to have missed the years-long contentious debate about locating Titan America's proposed cement plant along its riverbanks.

If you only know about the Northeast Cape Fear from the news, you might think it is a place of limited value as wilderness. Or that it's a place not worth visiting or saving. If so, that would be a shame. Despite its checkered past and uncertain future, the Northeast Cape Fear is one of the most stunning wild areas that you can visit in the Wilmington metro area. North Carolina's Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR) heartily agrees. That's why the area has been designated a nationally significant natural heritage area by their North Carolina Natural Heritage Program. NCDENR realizes this area is an important nursery site for anadromous fish, and it's also home to the federally endangered shortnose sturgeon and red-cockaded woodpecker. In addition, the area has several federal species of concern, including Rafinesque's big-eared bat and yellow lampmussel.

Yet conservation-minded organizations like Cape Fear River Watch know it's hard to get folks excited about protecting the river by making the humble yellow lampmussel the "face of the river." If Kemp had suggested we hit the river so he could show me shellfish, I would have smiled politely and told him I'd get back to him once I'd checked my calendar. Offer to show me black bear cubs and bobcat, and I am ready to roll. Kemp's familiar with this reaction. People want to see these splendid creatures. When they do, they remember, and they want to help protect their habitat here on the river.

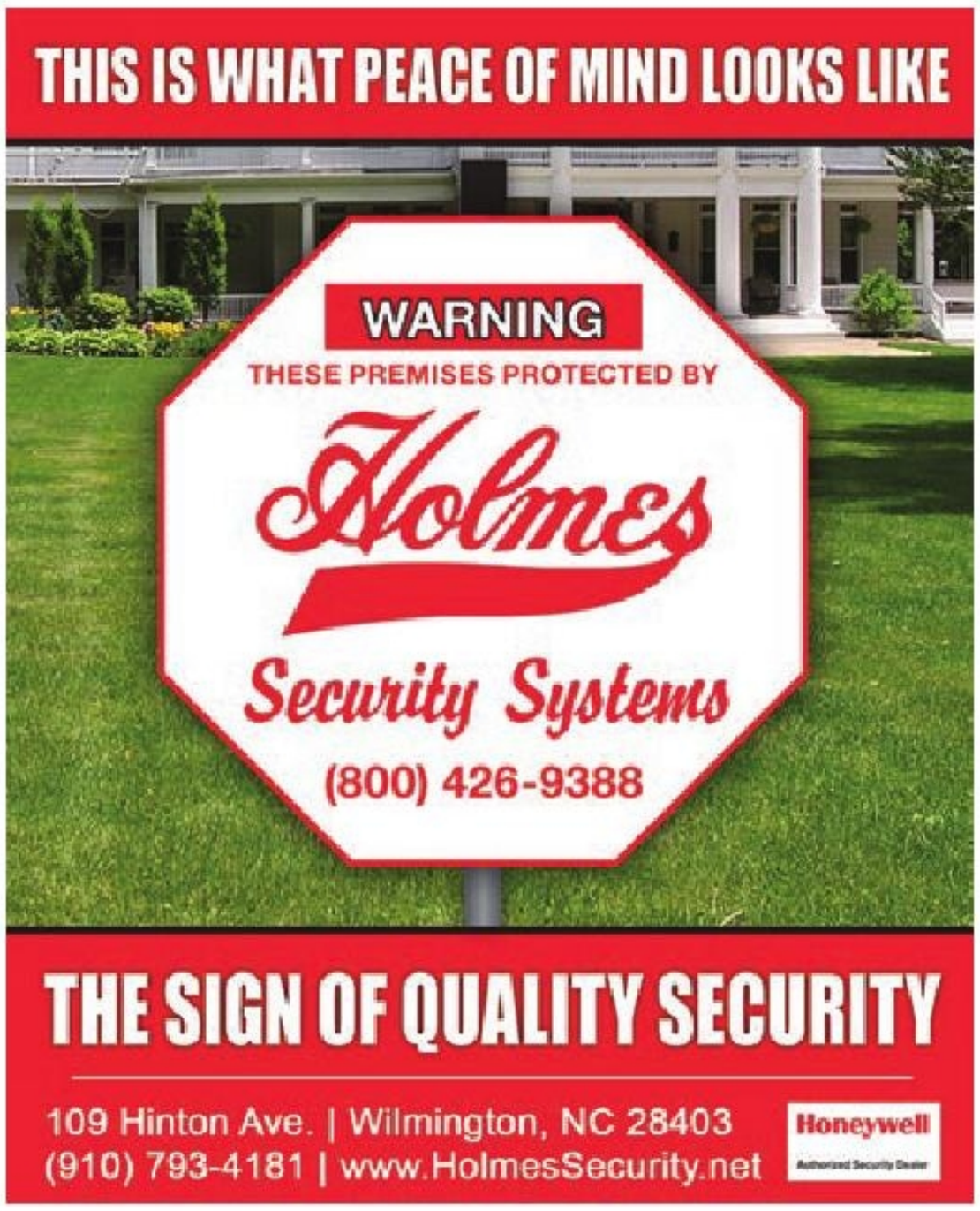
As Kemp and I motor up the river, it's evident that the Northeast Cape Fear is what makes Castle Hayne a truly special place. Spring is in full swing. A golden sheen of pollen lines the banks, and down several creeks I can see the waterlilies beginning to bud. A small orchid has sprouted on a decaying tree limb. Two osprey have returned to nest in a large cypress, and the male swoops back to the nest to check on his mate, with what appears to be a red shiner clutched and writhing in his talons.

Kemp guides our boat to shore in a heavily forested area. A fat water snake is coiled on a low-hanging branch, and he's so bold as to not be disturbed by our presence until we are two feet away. Kemp unlocks the secure cage where the camera is kept and draws back his hand. "This happens a lot." The box is swarming with fire ants.

"We get wasps too." He shakes off the camera, extracts the memory card, and downloads the photos onto his computer. This camera has recorded well over 200 photos. I'm amazed at what's passed through here in the preceding couple of weeks: wild turkeys, bears, otters, a lone blue heron, and numerous deer. The variety of wildlife is astonishing, even more so when I consider that the area captured by the cameras is relatively small, not much more than fifty square feet.

The cameras are set not to detect motion, but heat. Once heat is detected, they take a photo a second. The result at times is a beautiful, fractured, slow motion series. Some images, a buck swimming across a creek at night, two black bears roving the understory at dawn, are as elegant and haunting as anything you'd see at an art gallery. Some, of wildlife in action — a black bear scratching its back on a tree or a blue heron giving the camera box the eye, are hilarious. The daytime photos are in color, and the nighttime photos are in black and white.

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM CFRW



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An infrared flash provides enough light to make the photo but not so much that it scares off the animals. Occasionally, a shot will show an inquisitive deer or coyote staring directly at the camera, likely because, unlike humans, they can smell it or hear its tiny motor.

We visit a couple of other sites and inspect the photos. A shot of a doe shows three shining sets of eyes in the distance. The height makes Kemp think they're coyotes.

A powerful bobcat slinks past in another frame. A family of deer is digitally captured, and they move along in a nocturnal ballet, until one takes a bathroom break. "I see a lot of that with the deer," he laughs. He downloads more photos onto his laptop, secures the camera, and conceals it with some brush he's gathered with his machete. Once again, it's invisible.

Before we wrap up for the day, I ask him to head down nearby Island Creek, one of my favorite spots to kayak. This sheltered creek is shaded by a beautiful forest canopy, and punctuated by massive old growth cypress trees. It's also one of the best sites I know for seeing the vivid yellow prothonotary warblers. Two beaver lodges have been recently constructed on the southern shore, and I hear a hawk keen.

Kemp asks the time, and it breaks my heart to depart from such a lovely place, but I know the shy inhabitants of the river forest are waiting, patiently, for us to leave.

Want to visit?

The best place to launch a boat or kayak is from the Castle Hayne Boat Ramp, 6418 Orange Street, Castle Hayne.

Want to learn more about Riverkeeper Kemp Burdette and Cape Fear River Watch?

You can join Kemp and crew at one of Cape Fear River Watch's Saturday seminars, monthly kayak trips, or monthly clean-ups. In the warmer months, CFRW partners with the Sierra Club and runs educational motor boat tours along the Northeast Cape Fear. Info: www.cfrw.us.

Want to learn about the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program?

Visit www.ncnhp.org.

Interested in conservation efforts along the Northeast Cape Fear?

Check out the Coastal Land Trust's Northeast Cape Fear River Initiative at www.coastal-landtrust.org/waterways.

Author Virginia Holman teaches in the Creative Writing Department at UNC Wilmington. She is also ACA certified Level 3 Coastal Kayak Instructor and guides part time with Kayak Carolina.

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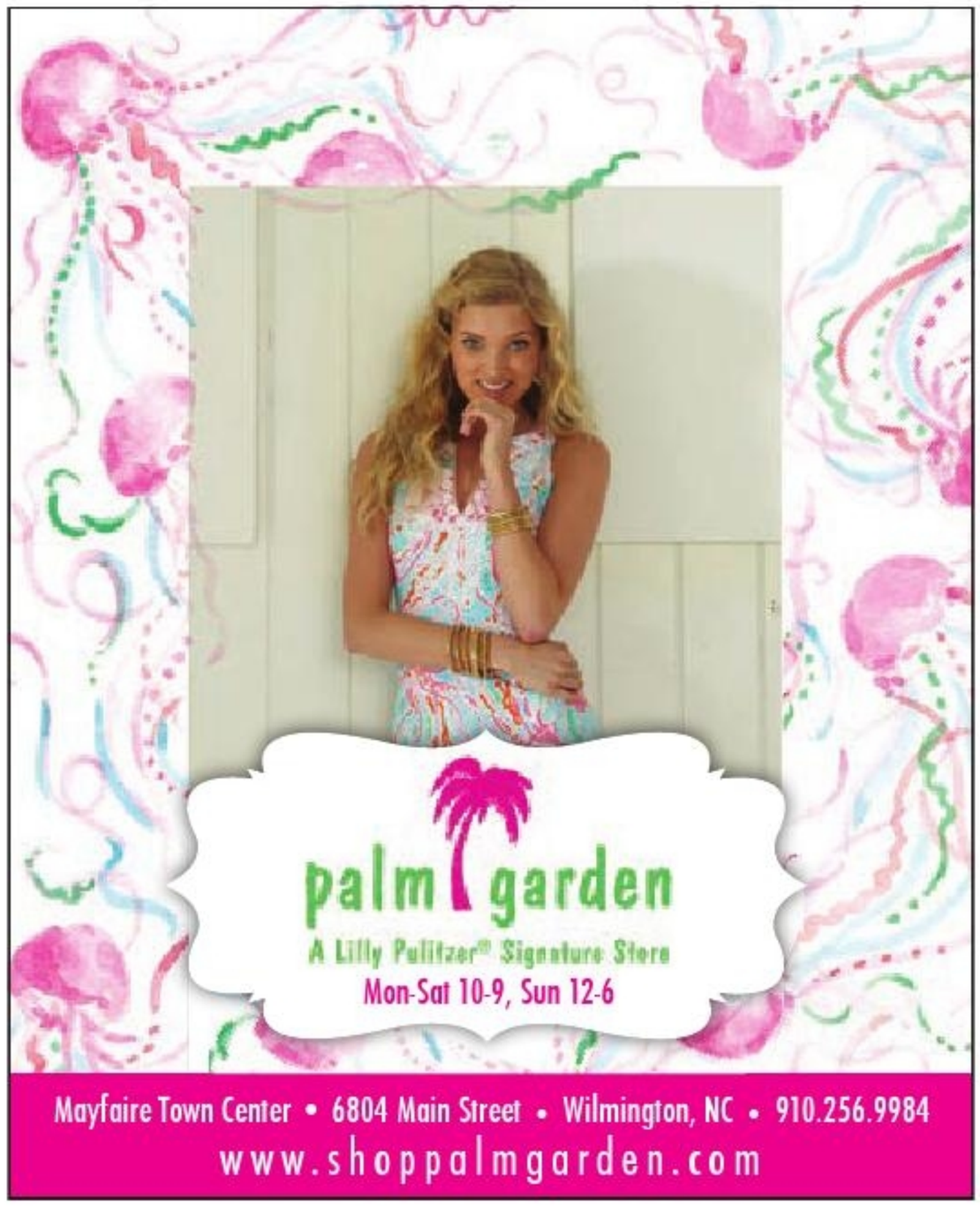
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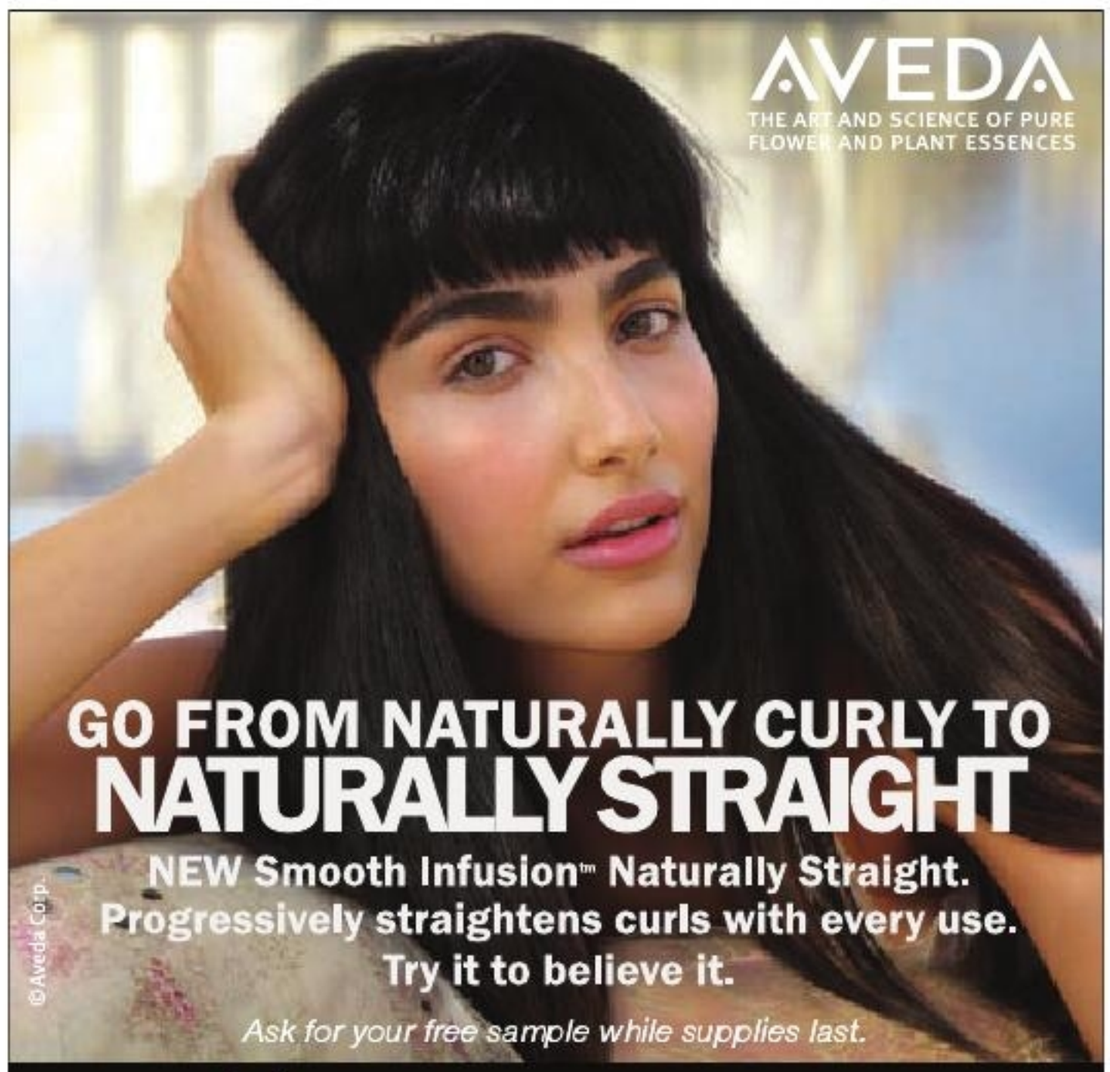
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The Truth About Birds and Marriage

On my friend's wedding day,
a pair of waxwings flew into his bay window.
We were at his house, on the side of the mountain,
listening to the preacher explain the importance
of marriage and vows when we heard the thud and turned.
The bride's mother was a vet and she said
to put the birds in a brown paper bag.
She said they were probably only stunned and needed
the darkness and quiet to recover. And eventually,
as we drank and danced, there was a rustling in the bag,
so we opened it and the birds flew up and away and we cheered.

Years later, when my friend and his wife
were in the middle of a divorce a few of our friends
said those birds were a bad omen. But I've been married
long enough now to know it wasn't a pair of birds
crashing into the window that doomed them.
It's usually nothing as dramatic as that
but more the slow winding down of a marriage,
the way it can be chipped away at day after day
and whether or not it's going to last has about as much
to do with birds crashing into windows as it does plain dumb luck.

— *Steve Cushman*

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO
Laurence Sprunt

By Jim Dodson · Photographs by Mark Steelman

The afternoon visitor rang the doorbell three times and was just about to give up when he heard a friendly toot of a horn and turned to see a white SUV speeding around his parked car and over the lawn of the pretty Colonial on Country Club Drive.

Laurence Sprunt gave a casual wave from the passenger seat as his effervescent daughter, Annie Gray Johnston, cheerfully called out, "Sorry we're late! Be there in a second! Daddy had a lunch date!"

A few minutes later, Laurence Sprunt settled in a comfy armchair and smiled over his glass of iced tea.

"I had lunch with Nan Graham," he explained. "She's quite a lively talker and sure knows her history hereabouts."

"Funny," his visitor observed, "she told me exactly the same thing about you. She said you are, in a way, Mr. Cape Fear."

Laurence Sprunt sighed. "I fear Nan Graham greatly exaggerates. By the way, it wasn't a date per se. Most of the time I'm a happily married man, you see. My wife, Beth, and I have been married a long time."

"Fifty years this month," provided Annie Gray, taking a seat opposite her father.

"No, it's not that long," said Laurence with mock surprise, leaking another sly smile.

"Yes it is," said his daughter. "Daddy's just being a devil. We're actually having a fiftieth wedding anniversary party in a few weeks. It's a big month for Daddy. He turns 87 in just a few days."

"Well," Laurence informed his daughter, "your mother says she isn't interested in coming. I'll have to work on her to do so. You know how she is. Stubborn, that woman." His gray eyes twinkled roguishly and he sipped his iced tea. It was clear Mr. Laurence Sprunt was having his visitor on.

"Mama says she'll only have to compete with Daddy for attention," Annie Gray said.

"How does it feel to be 87?" the visitor asked.

Laurence Sprunt, noted local historian, naturalist, sportsman, raconteur, the last son of Orton Plantation and author of the most folksy and entertaining memoir in recent memory on Wilmington and Cape Fear life, grimaced.

"Terrible! Everything aches. And worst of all, I have to have the women in my life drive me everywhere. They won't let me out of their sight! I have to sneak away to have a good drink and play poker with my friends."

"You play poker?"

"I do," he confirmed. "I don't do badly either, as a rule. Want to see my best poker face?"

"Yes sir."

And with that, Laurence Sprunt stared blankly at his visitor for a long moment.

"That's quite a face," his visitor agreed. "I can't begin to tell what you're thinking."

"Thank you. It's a gift and very helpful. I use it on the women in my life all the time."

"Daddy is a born jokester," said Annie Gray, shaking her head.

Four years ago, a sea change in the cultural life of Wilmington and the Lower Cape Fear occurred when billionaire-hedge fund manager Louis Moore Bacon, a native of Raleigh, purchased historic Orton Plantation from Laurence Sprunt and his family for a reported $45 million. Soon afterward he announced plans to close the treasured property to the public for a comprehensive restoration of the house and gardens known to thousands of visitors, and newlyweds, launching a monumental effort to bring back surrounding longleaf forests and the plantation's once fabled rice fields on the Cape Fear river plain.

Bacon's own ties to Orton go back to its establishment as a working plantation in the 18th century by his ancestor Roger Moore, one of eight lords proprietors granted the land by England's King Charles II in America, who inherited the land from his brother, Maurice, after establishing Brunswick Town in 1726. Using slave labor, Moore cut down forests, dammed creeks and flooded fields to produce rice, turning Orton Plantation into the region's most significant working plantation. Upon his death in 1750 he left the property, 250 slaves and hundreds of acres of rice to his son, who later sold the plantation to Richard Quince, one of the region's most active merchants and traders and an active participant in the American Revolution. In 1796, Roger Moore's grandson Benjamin Smith, a former aide-de-camp to George Washington who established the town of Southport at the mouth of the Cape Fear, purchased Orton and ran it through his term as governor of North Carolina — though through costly mistakes in management and a dwindling rice market he lost his fortune and died a pauper, causing Orton to be sold on the auction block.

Its next owner, Dr. Frederick Jones Hill, a grandson of Nathaniel Moore, finished the plantation's neoclassical house and helped establish public education in the Cape Fear region. By the outbreak of the Civil War, Orton was in different hands and its fortunes were severely declining. On the brink of being abandoned, it was largely only saved by being appropriated by Union troops and used as a field hospital.

In August 1872, Orton was again put on the auction block, though it didn't sell. The property languished and decayed until a cotton and naval stores merchant and avid outdoorsman named Kenneth Murchison purchased the property, restoring the house and rice fields, and used it as his winter home until selling the plantation to James Sprunt. At 18 years of age, Sprunt served as a purser on several Confederate blockade runners and joined his father Alexander Sprunt's cotton export business after the war. For a time, based out of Wilmington, the Sprunts operated the most successful cotton export business in the world. James Sprunt bought Orton as a wedding gift to his wife, Luola.

PHOTO STYLIST DANIELLE BOISSE

Among other things, James began the plantation's gardens and planted the live oaks that became a living symbol of Orton's graceful revival. In 1915, he also built a family chapel that would become, over generations, one of the most popular wedding sites in North Carolina; financed the construction of several Cape Fear area churches; and wrote perhaps the first comprehensive history of the region, *Chronicles of the Cape Fear*, published in 1914.

After James Sprunt's death in 1924, son J. Laurence and his wife, Annie Gray, expanded the gardens through the 1930s and '40s by extensively planting camellias, azaleas, flowering peach and hydrangeas, eventually opening the gardens to the public. After ownership of Orton passed to their three sons, Kenneth Murchison, Samuel Nash and Laurence Gray Sprunt, Laurence and his wife, Beth, purchased the plantation's famed gardens and maintained them until the entire plantation was sold to Louis Moore Bacon in 2010. Though he promptly closed the property to the public, Bacon's stated goal is to restore the plantation and wetlands to their former grandeur and use Orton as a resource for environmental stewardship and historic preservation, making it available to outsiders on a restricted basis.

"The family property has come full circle," Annie Gray says, sipping her own iced tea. "We think it's the very best outcome Orton could possibly have, something we talked about for a very long time. Orton is once again owned by a relative of its original owner, and a man who has the vision and financial wherewithal to bring it back to what it was — preserving it for the future."

Glancing at her father, she coyly added, "That's one reason I was so eager for Daddy to do his memoir — to write down all his great stories about growing up out there fishing and hunting and knowing the people who made Orton what it was. It was really a world unto itself, and nobody knows it better than Daddy. It was his world."

Daddy Laurence Sprunt merely nodded, grunted and smiled. "The good news," he said, "is that I have meddling rights. It's written right into the contract. That means I can go out there and wander around like I used to own the place. The bad news is I'm almost too damn old to do it!"

Laurence Sprunt's delightfully eclectic memoir, *The Past – A Stairway to the Future*, first printed in 2007, a hodgepodge of personal anecdotes and natural history peppered with genteelly wry political observations, memories of local colorful characters and a general meditation on life, begins in typical Spruntian fashion.

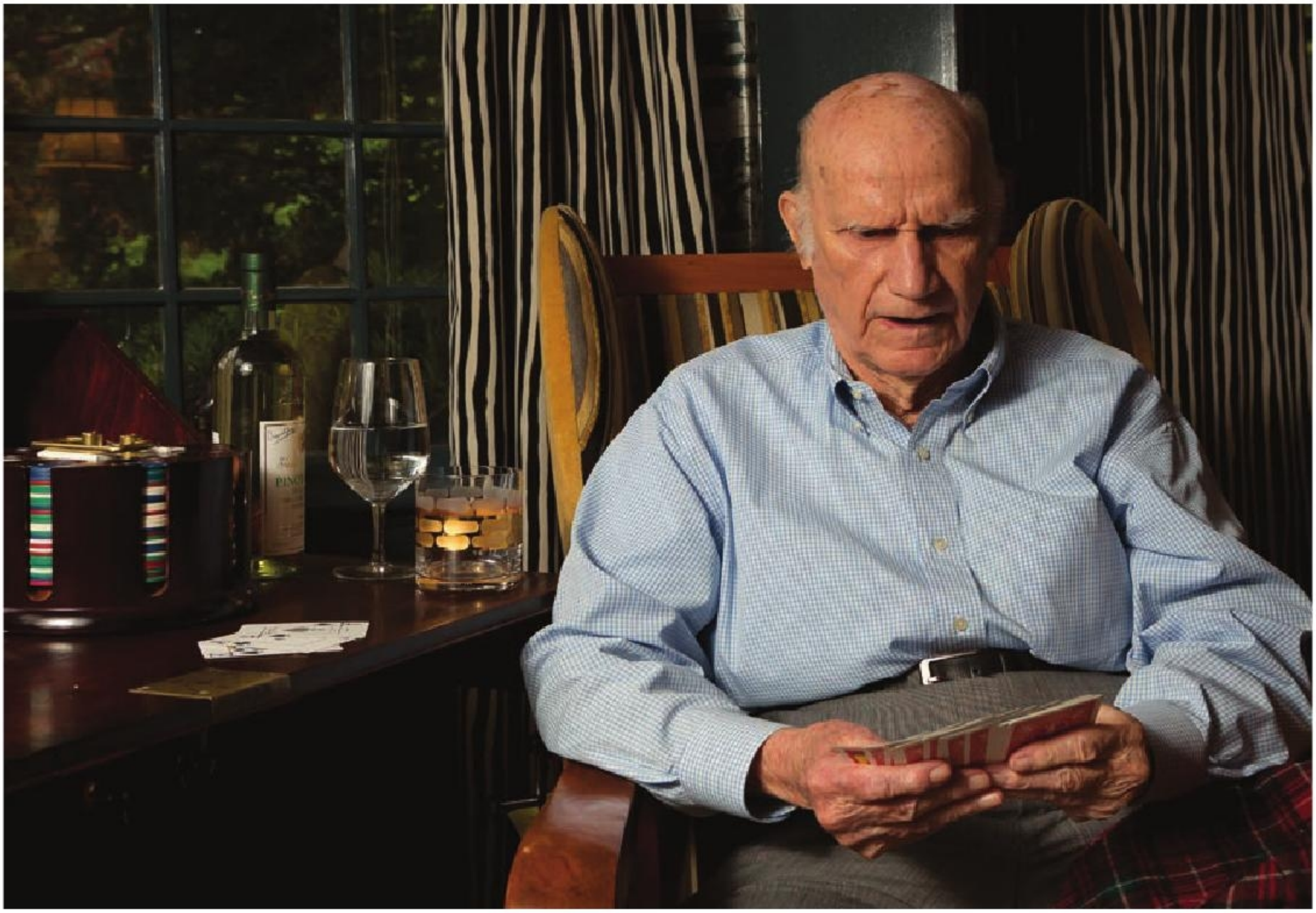
The year 1927 was important to me for the following reasons:
Babe Ruth hit 60 home runs.
Lindbergh flew the Atlantic alone.
Mother bought a few shares of IBM.
Mickey Mouse and I were born.

If it's true that human character is determined in the first ten years of life, not surprisingly, Laurence Sprunt's earliest days were shaped and shaded by the ravages of the Great Depression on the general Cape Fear region, recalling individuals and whole families who'd lost everything showing for help up at the family's residence at the Governor Dudley House on Front Street in Wilmington. Despite a collapsing cotton export market, the Sprunts were gracious civic-minded people, aware of their own precarious situation, which no doubt shaped the humility, generosity and good humor Laurence would become known for. "My family had been quite prosperous in the past, but the business began to decline even before the Depression. The Depression hit our family business and put a strain on my father, as it did to nearly everyone . . . Not infrequently, my older brothers would tell me, 'Mr. X lost all his money.' My reaction was that I should go help Mr. X find his money."

After "narrowly graduating UNC-Chapel Hill with a B.A. in commerce," the younger Sprunt joined the Navy and served for "three years and five days," before jumping into the plywood business and traveling the country for three decades. In time he also started a "moderately prosperous" farm supply firm and ran it for seventeen years before selling it and passing along his business affairs to son, David, in order to devote his time to looking after Orton Plantation — hunting, fishing, making detailed studies of the flora and fauna within the vast holdings, deepening his friendships with the plantation's workers and already vast knowledge of bird-life, cataloging the wonders of a rare and natural world he'd known as both man and boy, the unspoiled majesty of his ancient stomping ground.

Late one summer, as the tall weeds were turning brown, I was driving along a back road at Orton when an indigo bunting crossed and lit on a tall weed stalk adjacent to the road. I stopped and looked, savoring my good luck. It does not get any better than this. Now, if you do not like indigo, you will love it as displayed by Mr. Indigo Bunting. Suddenly a painted bunting, indigo's cousin, lit on an adjacent stalk . . . perhaps the most beautiful bird in North America. He is bright red, bright blue, and chartreuse green, all to help his efforts with ladyfriends. This rare sight made me think it could not get any better than this, whereupon a pileated woodpecker with its black and white wings in undulating flight and flaming red crest flew by in the background. They were probably the most beautiful natural observations that I have ever made. If John James Audubon could have captured this scene on canvas, it would have been, by far, his best painting.

As his 88th year in an ever-changing world (not to mention a fiftieth wedding anniversary) unfolds, the many friends and admirers of Laurence Sprunt like to speak of his uncommonly common touch with ordinary people and modest values that can only come from one who never fails to be pleasantly surprised by what he encounters, appreciates the good fortune of his lot, and takes nothing for granted. To this end, and the reader's delight, Sprunt's casual memoir includes everything from family letters and forgotten lore of the Cape Fear to the dining habits of gators; funny stories picked up from hunting pals and favorite employees of Orton; an excerpt from his father's splendid history of the Port of Wilmington mingled with personal meditations on life and the savage and



graceful beauty of nature—one man's tribute, as it were, to a vanished Eden.

For this reason, his locally published book went fast—and a second printing is now in the works, eagerly sought by those who relish a rare insider glimpse of Orton Plantation and the Port City as it was once upon a river.

"You know, looking back on things," he said the afternoon his visitor came for iced tea and talk, "I've had a very good life, far better and more confortable than most. Everything has worked out well except"—and here he paused and gave a mock glare at his smiling daughter—"for my cruel children, who took away my car and limit my natural running about. Though I lost my interest in killing anything years ago, I can still go down to Orton and meddle a bit, look around and see how things [Bacon's restoration] are coming. Fortunately, I've also had good luck with women—especially the one I married fifty years ago on the 189th anniversary of Paul Revere's ride." He added wryly, "I have a hope that she changes her mind and comes to the party."

"Mama's actually funnier than Daddy," Annie Gray expertly inserted. "But she rarely gets to show it because everybody wants to talk with Daddy. Especially the women."

"I seem to be popular with late-middle-aged women," he explained.

With this Daddy Sprunt told a tale about how his father paid him a thousand dollars not to drink and smoke before his 21st birthday—a ploy meant to help him avoid moral "ruin"—and learning to do the foxtrot at Lumina Pavilion after the war, chasing bluefish and mackerel in the waters of the Atlantic and staying in shape by becoming an Ironman tri-athlete that landed his photo in the pages of the *Star News*. "That was just ten or so years ago," he said with a wry twinkle.

"No, Daddy. That was thirty years ago," his daughter corrected him. "I remember because I was in college at the time and it was horrifying to have a picture of my father wearing a Speedo shaking hands with Governor Martin in the newspaper. Your tan lines were awful."

Sprunt shrugged. "Oh, well. It seems like ten years ago." Then he asked, "Is it time for a vodka yet?"

"Is vodka your favorite drink?" his visitor asked.

"No. Not at all."

"What is your preferred libation?"

"Whatever you've got," he deadpanned. His poker face was back.

And so the afternoon went, from one funny comment to another, from one tender story of a vanishing world to his gratitude to his remaining seven "poker pals" who meet to deal the cards and gamble "for high stakes—maybe a buck or two" at least once a week.

Because 2,000 copies went so quickly, daughter Annie Gray is working on him to write a sequel, noting the high demand for more of Laurence Sprunt from middle-aged ladies and others.

"I'm winding down, but I suppose I might tell a few more stories before I fade away like the Cape Fear coot," he allowed with his faintest devilish smile.

"Like the time you marked hundreds of Venus fly-trap plants with bits of toilet paper making the woods around Orton look like someone had spread litter everywhere," she remembered.

"It was a different world," the Last Son of Orton Plantation agreed, falling momentarily silent. Then he smiled, brightened, and cheerfully proposed, "Let's move on to a glass of wine at least."

The Mystery Ship

There it is, hidden in plain sight, across the fabled waters of the mighty Cape Fear

By Mark Holmberg

All six members of the Pegasus class of armed hydrofoils.

Yes, there is a giant missile ship pointed at downtown Wilmington, hiding in plain sight.

The former PHM-6 (Patrol, Hydrofoil, Missile warship) *Gemini* gleams in dry-dock, right across the North Cape Fear from the new stretch of the Riverwalk.

It represents 133 feet of flying death, 250 tons of aluminum that had to fly so fast over the water that the aircraft firm that made it powered it with the same jet engine you'd find in a 747 airliner.

"It was absolutely a blast to drive," Ret. Commander William Hughen, its former executive officer, told us during a recent interview from his Texas home.

In a historic town that largely exists because of ships and shipbuilding, this one stands completely apart. There is only one other like it in all of the land.

"This was without a doubt the most fun I have ever had with my clothes on," wrote David "Disco" Warren, the main propulsion assistant for this former Navy vessel.

Even though it was launched thirty-two years ago, the USS *Gemini* and its five sister hydrofoils are believed to be the fastest ships to ever fly a U.S. Navy flag.

They raced along at fifty-five miles per hour, three miles faster than the brand-new Littoral Combat Ships the Navy commissioned to thwart piracy on the high seas off Africa.

The *Gemini's* motto, "Done Swiftly, Done Well," was in harmony with the famous quote from American Revolutionary naval hero and father of the U.S. Navy John Paul Jones: "I wish to have no connection with any ship that does not sail fast, for I intend to go in harm's way."

These deadly hydrofoils bristled with eight Harpoon surface-to-surface missiles and a rapid-fire turret gun that could crank out a devastating hail of 76-mm rounds the size of Pomeranians.

These were also fabulously expensive, believed to be the costliest ships, per inch, to ever sail in the U.S. Navy.

The initial concept was to build a fleet of small-crewed but fierce NATO ships that could fly to distant trouble spots in the North and Baltic seas, and later, the Caribbean.

They served in Granada, but most of their might was flexed during the so-called war on drugs.

"The *Gemini* was great!" wrote chief engineer Lt. Jon Coile. "Fastest warship in the world. Awesome crew. Chased drug smugglers, ran them over (by accident), shot warning shots across their bow, and seized tons of pot, cocaine, go-fasts and scumbags."

The *Gemini* could and did turn on a dime. It could run down the racing cigarette boats preferred by drug smugglers because the giant (in comparison) *Gemini* would glide above the ocean waves on its foils once the captain ordered it to fly.

"You flew every chance you got," said Hughen, now a Texas high school teacher. "That's what we called it, flying the ship."

The *Gemini* also had two big Mercedes-Benz diesels for traditional motoring.

But when that big jet engine lit up . . . look out!

"There wasn't a clutch," Hughen explained. The *Gemini* would roar and shake and lift up onto its foils and take off. Zero to fifty — just like that.

You could feel it, Hughen said, and "you could hear everything inside the aluminum hull ship."

But alas, after a decade of service there just weren't enough worthy threats to justify these racing foils. (They would've been perfect for running down the legions of modern pirates now terrorizing shipping lanes off Somalia and other distant shores.)

This Pegasus class of Patrol, Hydrofoil, Missile ships were decommissioned in July 1993.

Four of the exotic ships sailed to Wilmington, some to David Roderick's boatyard across the river from the convention center. Three of those were scrapped.

But a wealthy Chicago man bought the *Gemini*, stripped it at Roderick's yard (including its foils), added two decks and fitted it out as a luxury yacht for cruises to the Bahamas.

Three years ago, the *Gemini* returned to Roderick's dockyard across from Wilmington, apparently with a new owner.

It's all very mysterious. The ship's been stripped clean again, right down to its aluminum bones.

You won't get many answers about it from the laconic shipyard owner. Like the character Woodrow Call in the novel *Lonesome Dove*, Roderick is not much of a mentioner.

His shipyard is one of those ghostly Cape Fear River spots where you can feel the souls of the old ships that were torn apart or wrecked there.

It's quiet and lonely. Rumors of homeless ghosts living aboard the *Gemini* appear to be untrue. Roderick allowed us to climb aboard this practically peerless ship to check.

Yes, the *Gemini* is not quite peerless.

One of its sister ships — the PHM 5 *Aires* — lives on in its original form, moored in obscurity on the Grand River in Brunswick, Missouri. A non-profit restoration group is trying to find a home for it so people can enjoy this last of a breed.

Meanwhile, its remaining counterpart in this unique chapter of U.S. Navy history gleams brightly here in Wilmington, hiding in plain sight.

Mark Holmberg, longtime reporter and columnist for CBS-6 in Richmond, Virginia and the Richmond Times-Dispatch *(where he was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Commentary in 2003), is settling in and exploring Wilmington. He says he has fallen in love with the Port City.*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK HOLMBERG

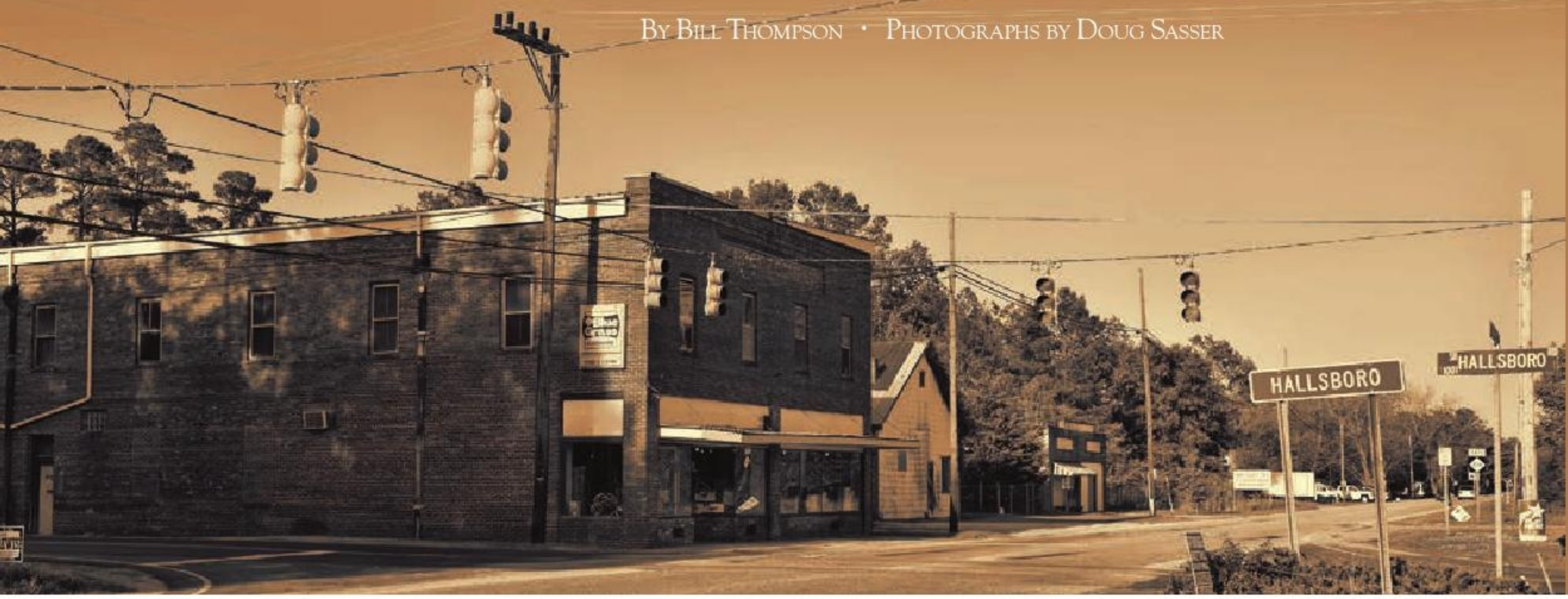
The day the ship was delivered to the Navy, 1982. Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, WA.

Today, the Gemini *sits, stripped, at David Roderrick's shipyard, pointed toward downtown Wilmington.*

The Soul of a Country Store

Down east in rural Hallsboro, a legendary gathering place keeps the light burning

By Bill Thompson • Photographs by Doug Sasser



The lights in the show windows were still on inside Pierce and Company when the sun rose on a recent chilly morning. It was all still much the same as it has been for nearly a century: the same lights, each one hanging separately by a cord from a stamped-tin ceiling; the same glass show windows, four sections across the front of the store; the same sun rising over the same swamps and fields that have been the mainstay of the little community of Hallsboro all these years.

Pierce and Company is not so much a place that time forgot as much as a place that has meandered from the past to the present bringing with it images that may or may not have existed at all.

It is, literally, the stuff of legend. Everyone who grew up in the small community has heard and probably repeated stories of events that reportedly happened at the old store. Like the time a would-be robber came into the original store in Red Bug and said to Mr. Dixon Pierce, the store manager, "Give me all your money." The story goes that Mr. Dixon, a man whose manner seldom changed, replied, "I'll not do it." A fight ensued, the invader fled, and Mr. Dixon became a community hero, his story told and retold around the cast iron stove that sat in the middle of the building.

Like most legends, it is hard to separate the truth from the myth. The closing line from an old cowboy movie goes, "When the legend becomes fact, print the legend." So it is with Pierce and Company.

The legend started simply out of necessity in the little community of Red Bug located in eastern Columbus County. The people made a living on the small farms and logging in the woods and swamps. About 1880, The Farmers' Alliance had a very small store run by Mr. Henry Wyche. It sold the basics: salt, patent medicine, maybe a little candy and a few other "notions." Folks didn't buy food from the store; they grew their own. But they did need fertilizer to grow their crops. Eventually, a few people organized a way to buy fertilizer collectively at a cheaper price (today we would call this a "co-op"). About 1904, that operation evolved into Pierce and Company.

The original owners were Mr. Henry Wyche, Mr. Worth Pierce, Mr. Vance Pierce and a silent partner, Mr. J. E. Thompson. They invested the handsome sum of two hundred dollars, fifty dollars each, in the business. They all lived within walking distance of the new store that was built at Red Bug, a crossroad where the small tram railroad built by the Short and Beers Lumber Company in Hallsboro ran down into the swamps and two small dirt roads crossed. The Red Bug name, ostensibly, comes from an attack of the stinging insects on the workers who built the tram road. Pierce and Company got its name because the owners said there were "more Pierces than Wyches" at Red Bug.

In 1924, Mr. Worth Pierce decided that they should move to Hallsboro, about two miles north of Red Bug, because that's where the railroad was. His statement to his partners was, "I'm moving to Hallsboro. Y'all can come if you want to." Mr. Thompson demurred and took his fifty dollars out of the company, but the others moved their business to Hallsboro, where Bennett Pierce had a small wooden store and Pierce and Company briefly shared a building with Mr. Leslie Pierce's store. [Editor's note: Bennett, Leslie and Worth Pierce were cousins. "There are a lot of Pierces around here," Worth Pierce reportedly said. "Some are more kin than others."] Those were booming times for the little town. The lumber business was growing and tobacco was becoming a bigger part of the agricultural economy. Pierce and Company grew, too. By 1926, the current two-story brick building was completed with a warehouse that extended to the railroad. The business was based on providing everything the residents of the community needed: food, clothing, building materials, farm supplies, etc. That mission continued for the next seventy-five years. Most of the small farmers signed a chattel mortgage listing items such as "one mule and wagon, one milk cow, a sow and three pigs" as collateral for getting the necessities for getting their crops planted, harvested and sold. Many of the folks who lived near Hallsboro never went farther than the general vicinity of the town unless it was to address a serious medical problem.

As the area's economy grew, Pierce and Company adapted and expanded. It built a sawmill and, later, a planing mill to accommodate the local landowners

who could cut their timber with their own little "peckerwood" mills but had no way to smooth the rough boards. Along the way, the company accumulated large tracts of farm and timber land.

At some time during the expansion, Mr. Henry Wyche's son, Byron, joined the company. Mr. Byron Wyche left his job as a schoolteacher and Mr. J. A. "Jim" Wyche, who had been a mail carrier, also became a part of the operation. Although the distribution of labor and the official titles aren't very clear, Mr. Byron apparently assumed the chief administrative role, Mr. Jim was the store manager, and Mr. Worth . . . well, the perception of Mr. Worth's role is loosely defined depending on who is providing the definition. However, there is some speculation that he probably was responsible for the mill operation.

Eventually other members of the family became stockholders and/or employees. When the family built two more stores at Freeman and Delco, Mr. Jim's son, Paul, supervised their operations. With Mr. Byron's illness in the early 1950s, his son, Ben, took over the business at Hallsboro.

At the peak of its operation, Pierce and Company employed about fifty people, making it one of the largest employers in the area. Other businesses sprung up, and at one time the little town had the largest payroll in the county.

As the economy of the area changed, so did the company. The mill closed in 1965, and the farm supply business was phased out, although it continued to maintain a good building supply business and general merchandise store. As long-time employees retired or passed away, their positions were eliminated and, finally, the railroad took up the tracks.

Though employees retired, customers kept their relationships alive as they re-visited the store and shared stories of the past. Burvin Hooks was a long-time employee who had a great relationship with his customers, joking with them, sympathizing with them and generally just being their friend. A regular customer came in one day, looked through the open bin of bolts and found a plow bolt like he wanted. "How much are these bolts?" he asked Burvin. "A nickel apiece or three for a quarter," was the quick reply. The customer, unaware of Burvin's humor, said, "I'll take six of 'em for fifty cents." Burvin sold the bolts for thirty cents. Such is the stuff of legend.

In 1990, William Jolly bought the mercantile and building supply operation. His brother, Thomas, joined him later. They continue the operation much as it had been for so many years, reducing some areas and expanding others. One of the most notable expansions was in the custom meat market. Although it wasn't the first Hallsboro store to have a fresh meat market, over the years, Pierce and Company has become widely known for the quality of the meats they sell. People from some distance come by to purchase the pork, chicken and beef products sold there. A particular favorite is the fresh pork sausage made almost daily. During the Christmas season, the market has been known to sell as much as 10,000 pounds of the special-recipe sausage. Some of the customers are former residents who come home for the holidays and load up their ice chests to take the coveted food back with them.

At one time, the store served as the post office for Hallsboro. The Red Bug store, in addition to providing postal service for that community before rural free delivery, was used by the health department as a "clinic" to provide immunization against typhoid fever.

The store is still the center of communication for the community. Not too long ago, a former resident called the store to get in contact with a local building contractor about some repair on the family home in the area. She had been unable to get the contractor on the phone but knew he would be coming into Pierce and Company sometime during the day. When all other communication efforts fail, Pierce and Company is there.

The store hours of operation are little changed over the years: about dawn to dusk. The doors open on the same building (although customers now come in the metal side door since the front door has been the object of several auto accidents), experience the same comfortable sense of hospitality that existed way before supermarkets and chain stores covered the countryside. When the doors are locked at night, the naked light bulbs remain shining in the old show windows to guide the past to another day.

Bill Thompson is a speaker and author who lives just down the road, in nearby Hallsboro.

BLAIR

Scallion

Fiction by Fred Chappell • Illustration by Harry Blair

"I have been reading a magazine," Mary Ellen said.

"Huh-oh," her father said.

"That's interesting," said her mother. "What was it about?"

"Food. The article said we are not eating a proper diet. Too many hamburgers. Not enough lettuce and broccoli and all kinds of greens."

"Your father likes hamburgers."

"My name is Eric Ackerman, not Benjamin Bunny," he said. "I need to keep up my strength to carry books. You'd be surprised how heavy a box of books can be and we sell a lot of them at Barnes & Noble."

"The article said that spinach makes us strong," Mary Ellen said.

"You must have been reading *Popeye Magazine*," her father said. He flexed his biceps to illustrate, but he was wearing a dingy T-shirt and the overhead light of the dinky, small kitchen did not flatter his physique.

"It was called *Smart Health*. Don't you want to be healthy?"

"Yes – as long as I can do smart health on hamburgers."

"We could have spinach burgers. I'll look for a recipe."

"Oh Lord. Is this another of your missions? A dietary missionary project? Are we going to suffer long debates and wind up eating horrible-tasting food?"

"I wouldn't know how to cook spinach burgers," her mother said. "Do you fry them like the regular ones or broil or sauté?"

"I don't know yet," Mary Ellen said. "I will have to read some more."

"How is your schoolwork? Will you make all A's again?" she asked.

"I don't like Language Skills. Language Skills is dumb. 'As white as snow.' By the end of the day, snow is dirty and sloppy. It should be, 'As white as the white of a boiled egg.'"

"It should be Language Skills *are* dumb," Mr. Ackerman said. "That would be the correct grammar."

"Grammar are dumb too," Mary Ellen said. "And I expect kale would be better. A nice, thick, juicy kale burger. It makes my mouth water just to think about it."

"It makes my eyes water," he said. "If I have to eat kale burgers, I will weep like . . . like a . . . what would they say in your Language Skills class that I would weep like?"

"They don't say weep. You would cry. Like a baby. That's what Language Skills makes you say. Anyhow, you would like burgers made of *good* kale and not the supermarket kind. We could grow our own."

"What Language Skills *make* you say. Grammar is important."

"Not to me. I made all A's, you know."

"Yes, I know," her father said. "Your mother and I are very proud." But his tone sounded dismal, like that of a meek youngster sentenced to Sunday school for a decade without parole.

Mary Ellen had a propensity to attach to personal ambitions without being able to formulate clear reasons, even to herself. She was sketching an unclear scheme to become a vegetarian, although she was not passionate to eat veggies, especially carrots, which in her eyes were of a color a little vulgar, too much like school buses. And carrot-orange did not fit well with her red hair. When she pictured herself with a carrot protruding from her mouth, she looked like one of those dreadful plastic jack-o'-lanterns that got remaindered after Halloween.

Eggplant was enrobed in a lovely, dark, smooth purple, but when you peeled it, the flesh was the same color as apples, onions, and light bread. Disappointing. Other vegetables had important drawbacks too.

She probably had thought of becoming a vegetarian because she liked the sound of the word. Anybody could be a writer or a shortstop or a preacher, but it required five nimble syllables to enunciate the title, Vegetarian. You gained importance when you yoked yourself to the term. If she had ever heard the word *utilitarian*, she might have kissed vegetables goodbye. "I used to be a vegetarian," she would tell her utilitarian buddies, "but I grew out of that."

For a 14-year-old, Mary Ellen was worldly-wise. When she got a little older,

Scallion

she would have a horse. That particular happiness was written in the stars, she told her schoolmates. Now that she was a vegetarian, she would name the horse Scallion and not Lost Vegas. He would be a vegetarian too.

But where was she going to situate her kale garden? The grounds of the housing project called Diaper Hill by nonresidents were covered with scraggy grass that revealed patches of red clay like scabs on knees and elbows. Even if she tried to dig in that earth as hard as terra cotta, it would never yield produce. And if it did, people would steal it or yank it up for sport.

Her friend Merla claimed an uncle who owned a farm. He might let her have a little spot to plant, but she would have no way to travel to it. Too bad. Merla's Uncle Haskin could teach her how to farm her plot of kale. Mary Ellen wasn't certain how to begin the task.

She would need implements. A hoe and a watering can and bib overalls and a straw hat to shade her eyes and a red bandanna to pull from her back pocket and wipe her forehead.

And fertilizer. Plants must be fed, she knew. When she acquired her stallion Scallion she would have lots of fertilizer, but that would be years from now. She had been saving up five-dollar bills in a big envelope marked Lost Vegas, but she had amassed only thirty dollars. "A thousand years," she said. "It will take ten thousand years."

Yet even when she was discouraged, she never gave up. Every problem has a solution. The trouble now was that there was a bunch of problems tangled together in a tight knot.

Money was the most difficult of the lot, so she started working on that aspect and developed a plan.

Her mother owned three cookbooks that she kept stacked on the Formica counter beside the sink drain board. They were a shabby trio with spavined spines, pages soiled with sauces and wrinkled with water stains, pages missing. One was a *Rombauer Joy of Cooking* purchased at a yard sale. Certain pages of desserts had been ripped out. A collection of health-food recipes called *Mother Earth Loves You* sported covers painted over with Day-Glo pink and green. "A hippy heap of horse manure," her father described it, not saying manure. The third volume was titled *Fine Wine Cuisine*. It looked like it had never been opened.

Mary Ellen paged through the first two books inattentively, having decided beforehand to concentrate on the recipes that were to accompany beatific bordeaux and marvelous margaux. She was determined that her cooking had to be different from her mother's. Her mother could never conceive of inventing the kale burger, of keeping secret the ingredients that would make it so wonderfully savory, and then selling the recipe to restaurant owners for barrels of money. Mary Ellen only needed one sale to start with and soon afterward word would get around. "Kale burger sweeps the nation"— the newspaper headline read, as it emerged in her mind. She envisioned the accompanying sidebar in which a famous movie star revealed her favorite version of the kale burger.

As she read the cookbooks, she made a list of the elements she must procure. Kale, of course, was paramount. And bread. She decided it ought to be some sort of cornbread hamburger bun — for the rustic touch. A number of families in the project ate black-eyed peas and collards. She could boil up some peas or get them in a can and mash them up and mix them with her kale and make a patty. Kale was green, as were collards, so she figured they would taste pretty much the same.

On hamburgers we smear mustard and squirt ketchup, but these did not seem to go with kale. The colors were wrong and she couldn't taste the combinations in her mind. There were no recipes for kale in *Fine Wine Cuisine*, but she found a spinach salad that called for vinaigrette classique. She did not know what a vinaigrette was. For that matter, she did not know what *cuisine* meant. But she was content to go forward on the strength of faith alone.

The ingredients for the vinaigrette dressing were two different vinegars, "fine sea salt to taste," and a cup of expensive olive oil. "Extra virgin" must mean costly. She would make do with cider vinegar, Mazola corn oil, and Morton's iodized salt.

I have to start somewhere, she thought. Nobody will be able to tell the difference.

All the main dishes in the book were cooked with wines: medoc, beaujolais, cabernet franc, and other unpronounceables. There was no wine in the apartment. Her father often kept a few cans of what he called PBR in the cramped refrigerator. Wine and beer must be about the same, Mary Ellen deduced, because people drank both to get drunk. She would use PBR, if she could figure out how to snitch one.

Now she was ready to prepare to begin to get ready.

Mary Ellen was deeply sorrowed to remove a five-dollar bill from the envelope marked Lost Vegas. Five dollars represented the savings of a whole week. But if she didn't obtain ingredients, she could not experiment with them and her famous secret recipe would never come into existence.

In the little grocery store across the broad street from Drummond Heights — as a sign bewildered with graffiti named her neighborhood — she found no kale. She knew the storekeeper, a thin, gloomy, unhurried man everyone but Mary Ellen called Jacklight. She called him Mr. Ponder because he took so long to think when you asked him a question. The store was small, dimly lit, and the shelves were sparsely stocked. When you asked for condensed milk or orange juice, he ambled to the correct space and handed it to you only after you had paid for it. Even then he seemed reluctant to let it go.

"Kale?" he said. His voice was light and whispery. "The Joyful Sunrise Grocery Emporium cannot afford to stock fresh greens. They do not last long on the shelf and nobody likes fresh greens. They like meat. They like hamburger meat."

"I am a vegetarian," Mary Ellen said.

Mr. Ponder blinked and began to examine Mary Ellen as if he thought her flying saucer had carelessly departed without her. "No kale," he said. "No greens fresh."

"What else have you got that I might be able to use?"

A ponderous silence ensued.

"Well, maybe," he said at last. "Come over here." She followed him into the third of the four aisles and he knelt and retrieved a can from a bottom shelf. As he stood, he brushed dust from the top of the can with the elbow of his sweatshirt. "Spinach," he said.

Scallion

"Is it like kale?"

"Not much."

The front door opened and a man with pointed tufts of hair on his head called out. "Hey, Jacklight, did my special order come in?"

Mr. Ponder regarded him with mild interest. "No."

"I'll try again later." The tufty man left.

"What is his special order?" Mary Ellen asked.

"He thinks I sell dope," Mr. Ponder said.

"Everybody thinks so."

"Well . . ." It took a while before he said, "Grass."

"You sell marijuana?"

"If you took this can of spinach and drained it real good and found you a patch of fresh green grass in somebody's yard and cut you some and chopped it up real fine and mixed it with the spinach, it might taste something like kale. A little bit."

"Are you sure it would work?"

His eyes upon her upturned face were pensive. "I am sure of nothing. This world is no place to be sure about anything."

His sad tone saddened Mary Ellen. "Can you keep a secret?" she asked.

"Most of the time. Have you committed a criminal act?"

"I am trying to invent a kale burger," she said. "I want to keep the recipe a secret so I can sell it to make money to buy Scallion."

"Scallions don't cost a whole lot. I can get you some for free."

"Scallion is the name of the horse. When I get him."

An age passed.

"If you're going to try to shape a hamburger patty, you'll need something besides greens or it won't hold together."

"I thought about black-eyed peas. All mushed up. Salt and pepper. On a cornbread bun."

"You better stick to regular buns. I can tell you never made cornbread."

"How?"

"The way you talk, words you say. But I have lots of cans of black-eyed peas. That is a mover. Most of the brands have hog fat in them. You don't want that."

"What words?"

"Vegetarian. People that make cornbread don't say vegetarian. But you could use corn meal to kind of help paste it together."

"How much do black-eyed peas cost?"

"If you'll take that can of spinach off my hands, I'll give you a deal on a can of peas."

"How long has the spinach been here?"

"Since before you were born."

"Are you sure it's still good?"

She regretted her question immediately. The universe took another leisurely turn before he said, "I am sure of nothing."

"Thank you very much." She paid, ruefully, and left.

Next morning, after her father had gone to his work at Barnes & Noble, the labor he described as "toting Pattersons," Mary Ellen shooed her mother out of the kitchen, announcing that she was on the verge of a cookery breakthrough. She couldn't allow anyone looking over her shoulder, she explained, because that would make her nervous and might cause a misstep.

"All right," her mother said. "Genius at work. I won't get in your way."

So Mary Ellen went to the closet of her tiny bedroom, took up the cardboard box of ingredients, and lugged it to the kitchen. Before she opened it, she crossed to the vertical row of shelves that served as a pantry and took down an apron hanging there from a hook. It was the "Kiss the ook" garment that she hated with a passion so deadly that, given rein and means, it might wipe out the population of a medium-sized middle European nation. She tied it on with a pitiful sigh and laid out her elements on the counter.

A plastic bag of ordinary hamburger buns $1.37.

An ancient can of boiled spinach $1.50.

A newish can of black-eyed peas $0.50.

Six ounces of cornmeal in a business-letter envelope $0.10.

A double handful of fairly green grass $0.00.

Total outlay: $3.47. It sorrowed her so much to break the five-dollar bill that was supposed to help purchase Scallion that she placed the remaining $1.53 into her underwear drawer instead of the equestrienne envelope.

These expenses were curious. Mr. Ponder had first charged her $1.50 for the peas. When she objected, he lowered the price to fifty cents and raised the price of the spinach by a dollar. When she declared that this sort of pricing made no sense, he agreed and with a sad, unhurried smile, refused to change his prices. So she stopped dickering. Mr. Ponder was not dickerable.

The grass entailed no expense except for the dulling of the pinking shears from her mother's sewing kit. She had cleaned the scissors and restored them in place and now she washed the grass blades thoroughly in cold water. She had found a patch of grass behind a maintenance shed on the grounds of the project and she was certain that dogs and drunken boys had peed on it.

After she washed the grass she washed it again and pressed it mostly dry. When she opened the can of spinach she did not like the smell, so she drained the clump and washed it too. She chopped the grass as finely as she could with the dull butcher knife and mixed in the spinach. She poured the envelope of cornmeal in and looked for beer. Her dad must have used up the PBR, but the label of a bottle tweaked her attention. Red Wine Vinegar. This must be a kind of wine, she thought, pouring a strong half cup into the yellow mixing bowl with the greenery and cornmeal.

Now what?

Salt and pepper and something called meat tenderizer and corn oil, all stirred together to compose a greenish-blacking murky mush that closely resembled the flop from a distressed bovine. She dared herself to taste it and failed.

"It will look better when it is cooked," she said.

In a pan on a front eye of the small electric stove she melted butter, not measuring. Then she scooped up a handful of the mush and tried to make a patty, but it was too wet. She held the lump over the sink and squeezed. Then it was too thin so she put a cup of flour on a plate and smoothed out the lump and floured it liberally. Finally she had something shaped like a patty.

Wiping her hands on the pink apron, she stepped back from the plate to judge her handiwork and found it passable. She plopped it into the bubbling but-

Scallion

ter. It didn't sizzle the way she had imagined that a regulation kale burger would; it made a sort of guttural moan and oozed juices.

In three minutes it stopped oozing and she flipped it over. The upper side was black. *As black as ink?* "There is red ink and purple ink and green and blue," she said aloud. "It should be, 'As black as the space behind your eyeballs.'"

Black enough to look unappetizing.

But she soldiered on and let the patty tremble in the butter which had now turned a surprising purple-green color, something like the shade of a shoe polish rejected by the manufacturer. She opened the package of buns and smeared one with mustard. "Why don't we have any ketchup?" she complained.

When she lifted the patty from the pan it dripped liquid, so she laid it on the financial section of the newspaper which lay on the dinette table where her father had left it. In a few moments the paper was sopping, but the patty had dried enough to transfer to the bun. Before she did so, she cut off a little sliver at the edge and chewed and at last managed to swallow.

She did not like the taste one little bit.

"How can vegetarians eat this stuff?" she said.

Then she turned it over again and laid it on the bread. "We have to make a start somewhere. This is the experimental model." She would try it out on her father at supper.

He sat waiting at the table when she entered the kitchen. "My oh my," he said. "You're all dressed up. What's the occasion?"

Mary Ellen had exchanged her tan cotton shorts and soiled white shirt and flip-flops for clean blue jeans, a pleated blouse, and red-and-white sneakers. She had wanted to wear a flowery apron, but there was none and nothing in this whole starry galaxy would induce her to don the pink "ook" apron again.

"I am introducing a new kooey-sign," she said. "So I dressed up for it."

"Kooey-sign?"

"I think Mary Ellen means cuisine," her mother said. She too had freshened her outfit. "I saw the book open on the counter, *Fine Wine Cuisine*."

"This is something to look forward to," her father said. "What is it?"

She brought the large red soup pot from the counter to the table, removed the lid, and took out a small plate holding her creation, and set it before him.

"Ta-da!" her mother caroled.

He leaned toward it, then leaned back from it. "What do we have here?"

"It's a new kind of burger," Mary Ellen said.

"What's in it?"

"I don't want to say. I want to keep it a secret till I sell it to restaurants and burger palaces. If you like it, they will pay me money to know the recipe."

"Is it some kind of dreadful-tasting health burger?"

"I don't think so."

He took away the top of the bun and peered at the patty. "It's got writing on it," he said.

Mary Ellen edged to the table and examined it. The patty was a purple-gray color that set off the bold, black news headline on top. "I thought it would be cute to have writing on it," she said, thinking quickly.

"What is cute about 'U. S. Stock Yields Drop 2%'?"

"You like to read the news when you eat. This way you can —"

"Never mind," he said. He clapped the bun-top over it. He sat up straight in his chair, closed his eyes, and took a long, deep breath. Then he opened his eyes and declared with the calm determination of Joan of Arc before her judges, "I am going to try it now."

"Would you like it warmed up?" his wife asked. "It has been sitting around

He silenced her with a curt shake of his head, snatched up the sandwich, and bit into it. As he chewed his eyes widened and then grew wider. He chewed faster and swallowed and took another, larger bite. Then he laid the uneaten half on the little white plate and said, "This is great stuff. This is one of the best hamburgers I ever ate. Ever."

Mary Ellen was able to stop herself just in time from shouting out in irritation: "It is a *kale burger*! For *vegetarians*! *Not* a hamburger!"

So she said nothing and only watched as he devoured the remainder.

"Are there any more?" he said. His tone was almost plaintive.

"No," she said. "It was an experimental model. But I can make more, if there is popular demand."

"Well, I'll demand. Do I count?"

"Oh yes. Would you like to invest in the recipe? If it catches on, we will make a lot of money and buy Scallion."

"What is Scallion?"

"A horse not named Lost Vegas."

"Invest money, you mean?"

"Yes."

"How much?"

She blurted an enormous figure. "Forty dollars."

"Whoa. That's serious money. I'd need to think about that."

"You say it is a real good burger."

"I don't want to pay forty dollars for one hamburger."

"I'd tell you the secret recipe."

"Well . . . maybe. I'll have to think about it."

"Don't wait too long," she said. "Maybe some other people would want it."

"It's a good hamburger."

It is not a hamburger, Mary Ellen thought. It is vegetarian. Then it occurred to her that any circular object plunked onto bread was hamburger, as far as her father was concerned. For him, *hamburger* was the same word as *food*. If she had served him a Dolly Parton CD on a bun with mustard, he would have declared it a good hamburger.

Maybe there were lots of people like her father. If there were, she was going to be rich, rich, rich. Scallion would be a pampered animal. She would house him in a golden stable and feed him kale burgers day in and day out. **OH**

Retired UNCG creative writing professor and former North Carolina Poet Laureate Fred Chappell wrote about the headstrong and rebellious Mary Ellen and her quest for a horse in the July, 2013 "Summer Reading" issue of Salt.

Best Reader Memoirs 2014

Earnestly Seeking Ernest

By Steve Spangler

The time spent in the hospital that night was not as a patient but as a caregiver. My grandmother, Viola Pauley Spangler, was dying. When Dad came to relieve me from my shift the next morning, he asked how the night had gone. "As well as could have been expected," I said, "but I have a question."

He looked at me with that "bring on the question" kind of look as I continued. "In the middle of the night, Grandmother was carrying on a conversation with two people that I did not know. Dad, who are Jim and Ernest?"

The singular side of the conversation I heard was animated, and in its own way, intimate.

"Well, Jim was the name your grandmother called your granddad," my father explained.

My grandfather, James Samuel Spangler, died before my second birthday. I have no personal recollection of him, but he lives on for me through family stories.

"And Ernest . . ."

Dad paused for the longest time before continuing.

"Ernest was your grandmother's illegitimate son. He was killed in World War II."

That was the first time I had heard his name or that story.

Not long after the hospital conversation, the subject resurfaced. While visiting with one of Viola's cousins, she began to relate stories of growing up in a log cabin with Viola in Burke's Garden, Virginia. She was joyful as she shared stories of a time long past which had been difficult and trying but happy at the same time. When my uncle asked her about Ernest, her facial expression turned as cold as a frosty mountain morning. She paused and then said, "Ernest was the reason that your mother left Bland County."

And with that, the stories ended. It was as if a dark curtain had been drawn. I had to know more about Ernest.

Shortly after my grandmother's death, I began to gather what little "Ernest" material I could find. Carefully searching through long-stored family photos, stacks of yellowed newspaper clippings, a few letters and telegrams, I began to piece together the story of a short but interesting life.

I learned that Viola Pauley had suddenly left the family log cabin in Bland County and moved up to Leesburg, Virginia, where she worked for room and board in the home of a family directly related to her mother. In putting together a timeline, I realized she would have been pregnant when she made the journey. After a few months, she moved again to Roanoke, Virginia, where she lived with and worked for another branch of the same family. Not long after that move, Ernest Calvin Pauley was born. When I obtained a copy of his birth certificate, it listed no one as father.

Ernest would have been nearly 9 years old when my grandparents married. He grew up with my grandfather's five children and a younger set of stepbrothers and stepsisters. He made it through the sixth grade and joined the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1940, where he worked with a crew building the Blue Ridge Parkway. When the opportunity presented itself, he joined the Navy. He was ultimately assigned to the USS *Ingraham* and his home port became New York City. While on leave, he met a beautiful second generation Italian-American girl named Connie.

Just before he was to sail toward England to assist in the war effort, Ernest sent his mother a telegram asking her to please wire him fifty dollars. The family always assumed it was for an engagement ring to give Connie before he sailed off to war. The last photograph of Ernest and Connie was taken in a photo booth at Coney Island, just two days before he was scheduled to leave, looking deeply in love.

USS *Ingraham*

Just a few days after sailing from the New York harbor, the USS *Ingraham* was involved in a terrible mishap. In the thick fog of a North Sea early morning, another ship accidentally rammed the *Ingraham*. Of the 216 sailors on board, 204 lost their lives that day. Ship's Cook Helper Ernest Calvin Pauley was lost at sea on August 22, 1942.

His mother received the dreaded telegram on the same day her husband received word that one of his sons was lost at sea when his ship was sunk in the South Pacific. There was sadness enough to go around that August in the Spangler household.

Even though they knew he was lost, Ernest was listed as missing in action for one year from the time his ship was sunk. Connie tried to get more information on Ernest's fate when her priest wrote to the War Department on behalf of the family, but the answer was sketchy. It would be over fifty years before the government would declassify the details of that horrible morning.

When a particularly personal trunk was opened after Grandmother died, it was apparent that the flag presented to her by a grateful nation and a beautiful certificate signed by the president of the United States had been initially opened, read and closed back up, never to be opened again during her lifetime.

It might seem as if, when Ernest's life was cut short, she closed that chapter of her story forever, but Viola never forgot him.

When she died, Grandmother's well-worn wallet contained a few dollars, the last letter Ernest sent her, and the obituary she had placed in the newspaper a year after he died. Part of it read, "Ernest, no one will ever know how much I loved you." There must be more to the story. So now, more than thirty years since I listened in on a mother's side of a conversation with her long lost son, I continue earnestly seeking Ernest.

Steve A. Spangler is a writer, speaker, singer/songwriter and pastor who came to Wilmington from the mountains and now happily has sand between his toes. He can be reached at frontporchviews@yahoo.com.

The Equinox House

In a house once divided, the sun rises and sets on Lynne Herndon's exquisitely remade home, welcoming a new season

By Ashley Wahl

Photographs by Rick Ricozzi

This is a story of a house divided. You must see it to understand. And if you happen to know Lynne Herndon, then you must know that the seam is essential to the narrative.

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Against the backdrop of a tidy space dominated by clean lines and modern aesthetic, Lynne Herndon's playful personality shines. The proof is in the foyer: a yarn-bombed chair inspired by Poochi, the Chi-Poo (chihuahua/poodle mix) who once mistook the antique for a chew toy.

"I've even yarn-bombed the crape myrtle out front," says Lynne, whose honey brown eyes light up when she talks about fiber or fabric or color. Having recently retired, she is finally able to talk about those sorts of things. Knitting and felting had always seemed, to Lynne, at odds with her role as CEO of Cell Press, a distinguished publisher of cutting-edge biomedical research journals. Which is why she decided to move to Wilmington in the first place: It was time to play.

Lynne's projects are scattered throughout the house: a crocheted pillow, the felt backing on her grandmother's rocker, various works-in-progress. But no project has been as extraordinary or fulfilling as the house itself, a single-story 2,000-square-foot revamp on Dunbar Road with shiny copper gables and a rectilinear outdoor living space linking the house and studio/garage.

Here, Lynne Herndon found her muse.

When local architect Michael Kersting describes the renovation of Lynne's home, he unintentionally echoes the words of the great mystic poet, Rumi:

The wound is the place where the light enters.

In this case, the wound was a surgical incision that went straight through the roof of a house best classified as plain, although even that might have been too generous a description. Once the light entered, however, the grand vision of a thoroughly modern space fit for a woman entering her most creative and contented chapter of life began to actualize.

Kersting describes the original house the way one might describe a discarded sweater: Ordinary. Poorly constructed. Unremarkable.

"It smelled like cats," Lynne adds.

But when he saw the survey of the property, the architect made an inspired discovery.

"Whoever built the original house, for whatever reason, placed it on a perfect north-south orthogonal orientation," explains Kersting, who is standing beneath a spectacular linear skylight that separates a modern living area from a spacious kitchen where Lynne is pouring chardonnay to take out to the screened-in porch to watch the bluebirds flit from tree to tree, right over the in-ground saltwater pool.

In other words, twice a year, the house was in perfect axial alignment with the sun, which reminded Kersting of a house in France he'd read about in an architectural magazine that had a continuous skylight feature running through the center of it. He began exploring the concept of introducing a similar feature on an existing structure.

"I thought that was terribly intriguing: ripping the house in half and turning that rip into this way of bringing light into the interior space."

Existing roof trusses were positioned in such a way that the "rip" was possible.

David Lennard Builders installed the skylight across the middle of the house where, on the spring and vernal equinoxes, the sun rises and sets in exact alignment with the glass seam, marking the beginning a of new season.

Kersting calls it the Equinox House.

Lynne didn't like the house when she bought it. She had no grand vision for it, nor did she think it had great potential. But the location was perfect.

After 37 years in the publishing business, Lynne knew she was ready to shift gears. At the time, she was living in a townhouse in Harvard Square, about 30 miles from where she grew up, suppressing her creative urges if she found time to have them at all. Since age 24, her career had taken her from The University of Chicago Press to Churchill Livingstone in New York; Little, Brown and Company in Boston; Elsevier in Amsterdam, and, then, when she divorced her Dutch husband, back to Boston, where she worked at Cell Press, a branch of Elsevier.

In December, 2011, while visiting Jean LeGwin, her best friend since graduate school, Lynne saw a "For Sale" sign on a sandy lot just up from Jean's house, which is situated on a point at Pages Creek.

"It was pretty much on an impulse that I walked into this house," says Lynne, who recalls dingy siding and dated, laminate interior. And while she admits the house was no hidden gem — it was likely a pre-fabricated modular home built in the '90s — Lynne bought it anyway.

Jean told Lynne to call Michael Ross Kersting Architecture and David Lennard Builders, the collaboration responsible for designing and building

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MONACO
New York

her house, a modern metal cubic volume with wrap-around views of the creek.

They planned. They stripped the house to the studs. They created a custom space that Lynne Herndon not only likes, but a space that inspires her.

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In terms of architecture, form follows function. Angles are 90 degrees. Rift-sawn oak built-ins negate stand-alone furniture. Semi-transparent doors create privacy and, simultaneously, a sense of openness.

From the front door, the eye is drawn straight to the niche at the end of the hallway. The intersecting axis of the skylight and hallway creates a modern interpretation of a traditional compass rose.

Contemporary wooden shades on the picture windows match white oak floors.

From the hallway: two bedrooms and a bright red study that looks out to the deep red Japanese maple.

"We put as much glass on the walls as we could to open up the view and the landscape," says Kersting, who also added what Lynne calls the "coffee porch" off the kitchen, which is perhaps Lynne's favorite room in the house.

"There is nothing I would change about it," she says of the space with white quartz and black absolute granite countertops, stainless-steel appliances and an iridescent glass tile backsplash. "I just think it's very glamorous."

The pull-down faucet sink is perfect for a kitchen gardener whose crops come straight from the raised beds out back; the wooden table on wheels, an extension of the kitchen island, relocates for large gatherings.

And while she's chopping coriander or soaking lentils to make dal (an Indian stew), Lynne can watch the 60-inch flatscreen on a custom swivel that otherwise faces the living area, which is anything but traditional.

"I'm actually getting somebody to make me a painted canvas rug," says Lynne, whose mounted art pops against ivory walls. Each piece triggers a memory. An abstract painting of Maine's Mount Katahdin, for instance, reminds her of the winter dude ranch in Arizona where she met the artist.

"Probably a decorator wouldn't love it, but I do," says Lynne of her eclectic taste, displayed throughout.

Southern folk art on the screened-in porch. Prints from Paris in the kitchen. Piero della Francesca for the hallway. An original Henry Moore sketch in the study.

No need for bureaus in the master bedroom, defined by a floating structure that includes a closet on one side; headboard on the other side. The wall color, a soft shade of green, is called Contentment.

Above the built-in vertical grain headboard, the architect left space for Lynne's own felt installation, coming soon.

Enter the studio and have a glimpse inside Lynne's multi-colored, multi-faceted mind.

"This is where all the mess is," says the homeowner. "All the yarn, all the fabric . . ."

As she begins talking about her next project — an assignment from the online felting class she and Jean are taking — it is obvious that Lynne is entering a new season of her life at the Equinox House, and that she feels right at home.

The Thankful Gardener

By Gwenyfar Rohler
Photographs by Mark Steelman

A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; it teaches industry and thrift; above all it teaches entire trust.
– Gertrude Jekyll

"Thankful, and yourself?" That's Frankie Roberts' standard response when someone asks him how he's doing. He means it, too. No matter how tired. Or worried. Or overworked.

As the executive director of Leading Into New Communities (LINC), the local nonprofit organization that helps men and women re-integrate into society after incarceration, Roberts sees every day as a gift. Each day gives him an opportunity to offer hope to those who need it.

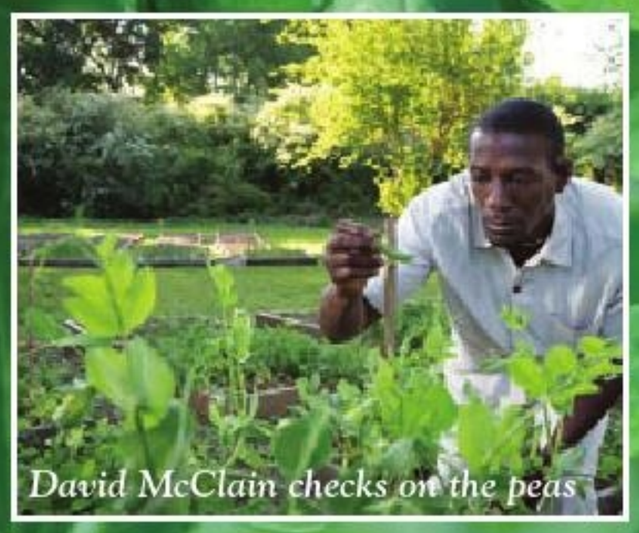
People who know Roberts know they can find him at Folks Cafe on any given morning. He's the handsome Sidney Poitier look-alike who will strike up a conversation with anybody who sits down beside him. Many people know that he was a barber for almost two decades on Castle Street, but they might not know that LINC was founded in the back of his barbershop in 2000, with great ambition and few resources. Since then, LINC has moved into office space and added residential assistance to its roster of services. Having helped over 1,200 people transition to gainful employment and independent living, LINC boasts a 92 percent success rate. In a world with an average of 70 percent of robbers re-offending, to get that number down to 8 percent seems nothing short of miraculous.

In 2012, Roberts and LINC added another chapter to their story of success: an urban farm at the new Marvin E. Roberts Transitional Living Facility on Division Drive.

Over one hundred square raised beds made of wood create a perfect grid up the gradual slope behind the living facility, a white cement block building that can accommodate up to twenty men and twenty women in LINC's residential re-entry program. One look will tell you this is not a lighthearted weekend project, but an intense farming operation, executed with care and maximum use of space. It feels almost Dutch, it is so meticulously engineered. Inside, Roberts and the LINC staff have made a concerted effort to open up the drab greyness and let in natural light; to soften, to make as homey as they can buildings constructed with extreme hard edges. Next to the garden is a fire pit surrounded by a circle of logs for seats. Just as the ashes from the fire nourish the soil, the quiet community trust at the fire pit nourishes the farmers. Roberts leans in to confide, "In group the other night, several residents expressed that the farm is helping them channel a lot of the different emotions they have had – and given them meaningful work." For Roberts and LINC, this is music to the ear. Getting a job after prison is hard. Getting a job that gives you dignity is even harder.

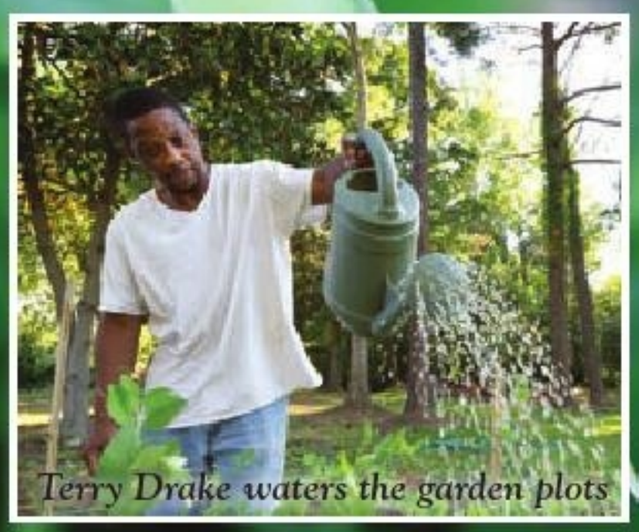
The Marvin E. Roberts Transitional Living Center is named after the man who inspired Roberts to co-found LINC with Tracey Ray in the first place. Marvin was Frankie's big brother, who came home from the Vietnam War hooked on

Terry Drake weeds the garden plots


David McClain checks on the peas

Mathis Harrison chops and stacks wood

Tym Jones turns the mulch


Terry Drake waters the garden plots

heroin. He cycled in and out of incarceration driven by the demands of his addiction. For his little brother, who watched their family life be taken over by this, it was hard to understand, and even harder to forgive. Seventeen years younger than Marvin, Frankie recounts that weekends growing up were about going to visit the prison, and when Marvin was out, things weren't any better. In 1998, Frankie, a deeply spiritual man, had what he calls his "Damascus Road Experience." After years of anger with Marvin, he realized he hadn't tried to be part of the solution, but had expected Marvin to figure it out by himself. Frankie decided that he needed to talk with Marvin, to talk about forgiveness and to begin to heal their strained relationship. On his way to see Marvin, Frankie was told that his brother had passed away. All hope for reconciliation was lost.

Or was it? After much soul-searching, Frankie realized that the best way to honor his brother's life and the lesson that Marvin had left him with was to help others get the support that Marvin never had. From that realization, LINC was born. Fifteen years later, the Marvin E. Roberts Transitional Living Facility opened, doubling LINC's residential capacity and adding the urban farm. "This has given me an opportunity to vindicate my treatment of my brother . . . through treating other people how I should have treated him," Roberts sums up.

"We are able to teach our residents self sufficiency," notes Dave Silvia, director of development and training at LINC, who is standing on the crest above the garden surveying progress over the last year. "To show them the economics of urban farming, and that urban farming is a way to generate income and sustain without the stigma of their past . . . and the labels that are applied to their history rather than their future." Silva pauses to regroup, staring at a frame of thyme and rosemary. "We can eliminate some of that through just feeding people." He looks me in the eye to see if I appreciate the magnitude of what he has just said.

"Our model now is square foot gardening and we grow intensely in these raised beds," Roberts confirms. It allows the farmers to maximize the use of space, seeds and water for abundant outcomes. Silva shares the story of the first raised bed, from April 2013. When it was constructed, one of the residents looked at it skeptically. "What're you going to do with that?" he asked Silvia. "Just you wait and see," Silvia responded. When the harvest yielded 128 garlic plants from one half and 172 spinach plants from the other half, the resident was so amazed that he suggested to Silvia, "Man! We need to do that to this whole place!"

That was the plan.

Using recycled wood, Silvia and the residents built and installed fifty-four raised beds by the end of last year. "We are growing things for profit to offset the cost of our program," Silvia notes. Primarily, that means herbs to sell to restaurants as garnishes. Through the winter and well into spring, thyme, oregano and rosemary flourish in the wooden squares, along with peppers. Lots of peppers. This year will be LINC's "Year of the Pepper," meaning they will harvest fifteen types of hot peppers and one sweet pepper to sell to local restaurants and through Feast Down East and Down East Connect, two online farmers markets. About 20 percent of the food that the LINC residents eat comes from the garden, too.

On Martin Luther King Day, a group of volunteers known as the "Crop Mob" showed up to help build additional raised beds and fill them with compost made from food waste picked up from Whole Foods, local restaurants and Carolina Farmin'. Thanks to the efforts of the Cape Fear Crop Mob, Food Corps and VISTA, three groups that work with community organizing and food access issues, close to forty volunteers showed up for "A Day On" of service. In less than six hours, fifty-four more raised beds were on the ground. The goal for 2015 is to have 216 beds in production, or double the number they currently have. But don't forget the big experiment this year: bok choy. LINC hasn't grown or sold it before, but Silvia is optimistic. Besides, they have a couple of thousand supporters living on the hill behind the garden: four hives of bees ready to pollinate. It was a tough winter for the hives, but with some TLC, they made it through. And with the intensive planting Silvia and Roberts have planned, they might be the busiest bees in the county. "Look for LINC honey next year!" Silvia grins.

Gardening is the cycle of life playing out: Seeds are sown, hopefully they are nurtured, then harvest time.

"You reap what you sow," Roberts says. "Abundance overflows the bucket you used for the seeds." Then composting, fertilizing the beds, and doing the hard work that pays off later. Roberts says there are few better teachers than the garden. I nod in understanding, taking in the prolific chess board overflowing with green leaves and life lessons.

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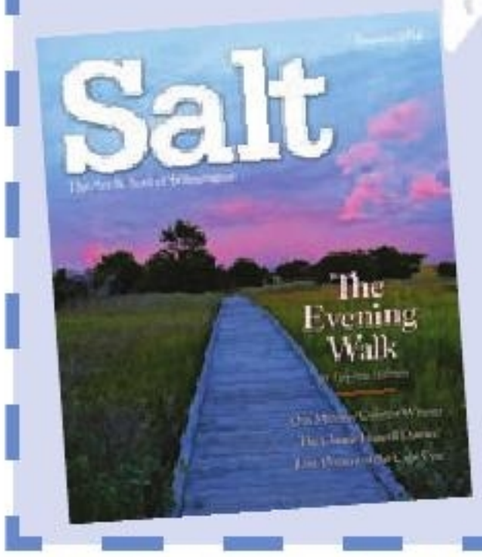

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ALMANAC

June

By Noah Salt

"If you would have a lovely garden, you should live a lovely life." — Shaker saying

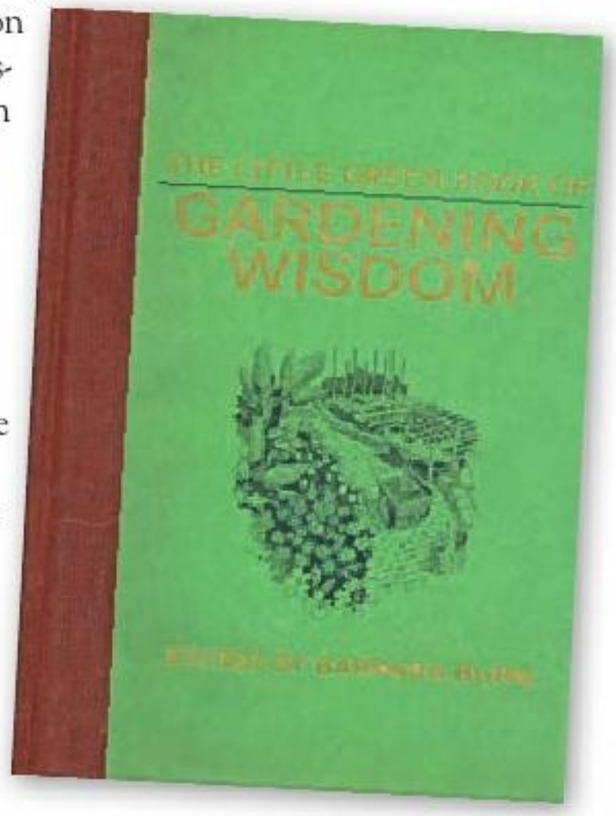
Road Trip Time

June is the perfect month to hit the outdoors. Here are six suggestions for a great family road trip:

1. Carolina Beach Music Festival, Pleasure Island, June 7
2. 16th Annual Edenton Music and Water Festival, June 7–8
3. World Ocean Day 5K Race for the Planet, Kure Beach, June 8
4. North Carolina Blueberry Festival, Burgaw, June 21
5. Historic "Double Opens," U.S. Men's and Women's USGA Open Championships, Pinehurst and Southern Pines, June 8–22
6. Greensboro Summer Solstice Celebration, Lindley Park, June 21

New on the Gardener's Bookshelf

While browsing in our hometown book store recently, we were pleased to find a splendid new volume of garden truths and observations called *The Little Green Book of Gardening Wisdom*, edited by Barbara Burn (Skyhorse Publishing, $16.95), the ideal wedding gift for gardening newlyweds or a gardening friend's birthday (or, for that matter, your literary-minded self for those lazy June afternoons when the work is done and the toddy is made). Chapters range from "The Art of Gardening" to rare and thoughtful reflections on garden work and plant selection from an impressive array of sources and authors stretching from ancient Egypt to Alice Walker; Cicero to Dave Barry. Three of our early favorites:



"Life begins the day you start a garden."
— Chinese proverb

"Much virtue in herbs, little in men."
— Ben Franklin

"Let the mint plants, the tarragon, and the sage push up their spikes, just so high that a drooping hand, as it crushes their slender leaf stems, can set free their impatient scents . . . I love you certainly for yourselves — but I shall not fail to demand your presence in my salads, my stewed lamb, my seasoned sauces; I shall exploit you." — Colette, *Earthy Paradise (1966)*

Bustin' Out All Over

In June, everything seems to bust out like there's no tomorrow — graduates, wedding toasts and skimpy bikinis come first to mind. And for good reason, the sixth month of the year brings the longest hours of the year in the Northern Hemisphere and the first official day of summer on the 21st, the so-called summer solstice that's been celebrated in one form or another since the first homo sapiens donned a pair of Ray-Ban Wayfarers and proposed to his favorite cave girl. The optimism and fertility of early summer perhaps explains why plants — and matrimony — enjoy their most vigorous periods during these early days of summer. June is still by far the most popular month for getting hitched — has been, in fact, for centuries. The month takes its name from Juno, the Roman goddess of love and marriage, whose female fertility and power to shape life was celebrated with a popular festival of flowers and feasting across the ancient world. Plutarch advised young couples to marry around the time of the summer solstice to assure a happy life with abundant children. In the meantime, a few of the latest wedding stats to chew on as you wait for the ceremony to begin:

2.3 million couples wed every year in the U.S. That's roughly 6,200 a day.

$72 billion is spent on weddings annually.

The average wedding budget is $20,000.

The average wedding ring cost $1,016.

The average number of invited guests is 178.

Ninety-nine percent of newlyweds will take a honeymoon. They will spend three times more than the average summer vacation.

$8 billion is spent yearly on honeymoons.

Most guests spend $75 to $100 dollars for a gift.

The average age of brides is 25.3; grooms, 26.9.

June 2014

Arts Calendar

Bonsai Society Show

6/7

Lobster Fest

6/14

N.C. Blueberry Festival

6/20–21

Art Garfunkel Live

6/29

6/1 Gallery Talk

3 p.m. Photographer Harry Taylor discusses the inspiration and photographic process for the creation of his exhibition, *Requiem in Glass: Brady's Greenhouse*. This is the final day to see this exhibition at the Museum. Admission: $3–8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

6/4 Afternoon with Jim Dodson

3 p.m. An afternoon with Jim Dodson, one of today's most esteemed golf writers. Dodson, winner of over a dozen major awards from The Golf Writers of America and a 20-plus year veteran columnist for *Golf* Magazine, is the author of ten books, four of which are *New York Times* best-sellers. He is also the editor of *Salt* and its sister magazines, *O.Henry* (Greensboro) and *PineStraw* (Southern Pines). Admission: Free. Brightmore Independent Living, 2324 South Forty-first Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 338-4492.

6/4–8 Live Theater

8 p.m. (Wednesday–Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). Opera House Theatre Company brings to life L. Frank Baum's *The Wizard of Oz*, complete with memorable songs and a number that was cut from the movie. Admission: $27. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

6/5 Garden Program

6:30–7:30 p.m. Program on gardening the Carolinas with master gardener and author Barbara Sullivan. Bellamy Mansion, 503 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-3700 or www.bellamymansion.org.

6/5 Lecture & Performance

6:30 p.m. Discussion and performance of African-American social dance with Dr. Tommy DeFrantz of Duke University. Admission: Free. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 US Highway 17 North, Wilmington. Info: (910) 686-9518 or www.poplargrove-plantation.org.

6/5 Young Artists' Opening

5–7 p.m. C Studio art opening will feature the framed work of children ages 6–16. This year's theme: insects. Independence Mall, 3500 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 392-1776 or www.studiocrealart.com.

6/5 Live Theatre

8 p.m. (Thursday–Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). *Dearly Departed* by David Bottrell and Jessie Jones. In the Baptist backwood of the Bible Belt, a family proves that living and dying in the South are seldom tidy and always hilarious. Admission: $5–20. Cape Fear Playhouse, 613 Castle Street, Wilmington. Info/Tickets: (910) 367-5237 or www.bigdawgproductions.org.

6/6 Airlie Concert

6–8 p.m. 40 East joins the summer concert series at Airlie Gardens performing country and covers. Admission: $8. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7700 or www.airliegardens.org.

6/6 Guided Group Meditation

6:30–7:30 p.m. Energy clearing meditation for closeness and connection. The Open Space, 411 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (949) 547-4402 or www.allovehealing.com.

6/6 Magic & Music

6:30–10 p.m. Magic show followed by the classic rock of Quilted Sky. Admission: Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

6/6–8 Spring Flea

3–9 p.m. (Friday); 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Saturday); 12–5 p.m. (Sunday). Shop vintage, retro and upcycled treasures with dozens of the region's finest vendors. Admission: $5 for three days. Brooklyn Arts Center, 516 North Fourth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-2939 or www.brooklynartsnc.com.

6/7 Carolina Beach Music Festival

10 a.m. Full day of sun, music, drinks and dancing on the beach. Entertainment by The Band of Oz, The Embers featuring Craig Woolard, and Jim Quick & The Coastline Band. Admission: $20–25. Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureislandnc.org.

6/7 Birding Program

8–9:30 a.m. Join Wild Bird & Garden and the Cape Fear Audubon Society for bird watching around the battleship. Organized as part of Brunswick Waterfest. Bring your own binoculars, bug spray and water. Admission: Free. Battleship NC, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

6/7 Bonsai Society Show

9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Public show featuring an exhibition of bonsai styled by local artists, demonstrations of bonsai styling, and vendors selling bonsai trees, tools and books. New Hanover County Arboretum, 6206 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: www.capefearbonsaisociety.org.

6/7 Run & Crab Crawl

8 a.m. The Pier to Pier Run and Crab Crawl includes a beach run at low tide from Johnny Mercer's Pier to the Crystal Pier and back, a SUP race, a crab crawl and a Biathlon option. Admission: $20–30. Proceeds benefit the Wrightsville Beach Foundation. Johnny Mercer's Pier, 23 East Salisbury Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: wrightsvillebeachfoundation.org.

6/7 Art in the Park

9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Oceanfront watercolor workshop with award-winning international artist Ken Withrow. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.pleasureislandnc.org.

6/7–8 Shredfest

9 a.m. Surf contest hosted by Seventeenth Street Surf Shop includes an open race, juniors race, and women and men's races with cash purse. Alabama Avenue Beach Access, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 799-7811.

6/8 Race for the Planet

8 a.m. Seaside 5k race through Fort Fisher in celebration of World Ocean Day and eco-conscious living. Admission: $25–30. Proceeds benefit the aquarium's educational programs and green initiatives. NC Aquarium at Fort Fisher, 900 Loggerhead Road, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-7468 or www.ncaquariums.com/fort-fisher.

6/8–15 Port City Music Festival

5 p.m. (Sundays); 7:30 p.m. (Tuesday – Friday). Summer concert series committed to the highest quality of performance and making great music accessible to all. The ensemble-in-residence, Camerata Philadelphia, will perform under the direction of conductor Dr. Stephen Framil. Admission: Free; donations welcome. Locations: Kenan Chapel (6/8); Windemere Presbyterian Church (6/10); Cameron Art Museum (6/12); UNCW Beckwith Hall (6/13); First Presbyterian Church (6/15). Info: www.portcitychambermusicfestival.org.

6/9 Symphony Classic

7:30 a.m. Annual golf tournament held at one of America's top 100 courses. Includes luncheon and awards. Admission: $325. Proceeds benefit the Wilmington Symphony Orchestra youth education programs. Eagle Point Golf Club, 8131 Bald Eagle Lane, Wilmington. Info: (910) 791-9262 or wilmingtonsymphony.org.

6/9–12 Shakespeare on the Green

8 p.m. *As You Like It* (directed by Cherri McKay). Live Shakespearean theater, al fresco. Admission: Free. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-2878 or greenfielakeamphitheater.com.

6/11 Birding Kayak Tour

4 p.m. Join Wild Bird & Garden and Mahanaim Adventures for an evening of sunset kayaking and bird watching in Masonboro. Reservations required. Admission: $45 (includes kayak equipment). Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

6/11 Sketch Comedy

8 p.m. Completely new and original sketch comedy written and performed right before your eyes. Admission: $3. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 545-4808 or www.theatrewilmington.com.

6/11 Bird Hike

8–9:30 a.m. Join Wild Bird & Garden's Jill Peleuses and Airlie Gardens' Matt Collogan for a bird walk through the varied habitats at Airlie Gardens. Admission: $5–9. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

6/12 Jazz at the Mansion

6:30–8:30 p.m. Songstress and saxophonist Serena Wiley performs eclectic jazz at Bellamy Mansion. Admission: $5–12. Bellamy Mansion, 503 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-3700 or www.bellamymansion.org.

6/13 Pleasure Island Concert

6:30–8:30 p.m. Heart & Soul performing classic rock and beach music. Admission: Free. Fort Fisher Recreation Area, 118 Riverfront Road, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureisland.org.

6/14 SUP Boot Camp

6:30–8:30 a.m. Brief intro clinic and paddle workout. Includes board and paddle rental. Admission: $45. Blockade Runner Beach Resort, 275 Waynick Boulevard, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 777-4979.

6/14 Great American Songbook

7:30 p.m. All-star performance of the "top ten great American songs" as voted on by the community, complete with voter stories and illustration. Hosted by George Scheibner, written and narrated by Phil Furia and illustrated by Laurie Patterson. Performers include Grenoldo Frazier, Julie Rehder, Jack Krupicka, Nina Repeta and more. Admission: $12–22. Proceeds benefit WHQR. Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500 or whqr.org.

6/14 Film & Discussion

5:30 p.m. Watch the documentary *The Cardboard Bernini* (76 min., 2012) by filmmaker Olympia Stone, which explores the life and work of James Grashow followed by a discussion and Q&A. Admission: $5–10. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

6/14 Lobster Fest

11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Fresh Atlantic lobsters available live or cooked to enjoy at home or with fixin's at the newly expanded Lobster Shack. Advance order, delivery available. Admission: $19–25. Church of the Servant Episcopal Church, 4925 Oriole Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-0616 or cosepiscopal.ecdio.org.

6/14 Battleship Legacy Series

9 a.m. – 4 p.m. *Armored Cruiser North Carolina* and the Great War. A premier display of WWI arms, clothing and equipment from enthusiastic costumed collectors. Admission: $6–12. Battleship NC. 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5797 or www.battleshipnc.com.

6/14 Kids' Music Fest

9 a.m. – 12 p.m. Three hours of live kid-friendly entertainment by the sea including face painting, rock star makeovers, bubble station, crafts, science activities, summer reading club and free comic books. Live performances by Mommie, Mr. Mark, the Port City Irish Band, Zach Hanner and the NHCPL Rap Club. Admission: Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 798-6303 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

6/14 Battleship 101

10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Ship volunteers stationed throughout the ship engage visitors in the areas of gunnery, radar, sickbay, galley and engineering, offering a glimpse of what everyday life was like aboard the WWII Battleship. Admission: $6–12. Battleship NC, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5797 or www.battleshipnc.com.

6/14 Beer Tasting Cruise

7 p.m. Two-hour beer tasting cruise along the Cape Fear River with a Front Street Brewery Brew Master. Admission: $40. Wilmington Water Tours, 212 South Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 338-3134 or www.wilmingtonwatertours.net.

6/16 Bloomsday Marionette Show

7 p.m. Bloomsday celebration featuring a portion of James Joyce's landmark novel, *Ulysses*, performed as a marionette show. Hand-made marionettes by Nina and Bryan Cournoyer; show performed by local puppeteer Gina Gambony and actress Christy Grantham. Old Books on Front Street, 249 North Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-6657 or oldbooksonfrontst.com.

6/19 Sounds of Summer Concert

6:30 – 8 p.m. Machine Gun performing classic and modern rock. Admission: Free. Wrightsville Beach Park, 1 Bob Sawyer Drive, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-7925 or www.townofwrightsvillebeach.com.

6/19 Exhibit Unveiling

6:30 p.m. Unveiling of Poplar Grove Plantation's new permanent African-American exhibit, *From Civil War to Civil Rights*, including opening reception and entertainment. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 U.S. Highway 17 North, Wilmington. Info: (910) 686-9518 or www.poplargrove.com.

6/20 South of K in Concert

7–10 p.m. Acoustic bluegrass band, South of K entertain at Ocean Front Park. Admission: Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

6/20 Hippie Ball

7 p.m. The best party of the summer featuring live music, dancing, and a costume contest. Food catered by Bon Appetite. Admission: $45. Proceeds benefit Kids Making It. Brooklyn Arts Center, 516 North Fourth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 763-6001 or kidsmakingit.org.

6/20 WARM Gala & Auction

7 p.m. Fundraiser/celebration for the Wilmington Area Rebuilding Ministry featuring cruise wear, dinner, drinks, dancing and live and silent auctions. Admission: $75–85. Proceeds benefit WARM projects. River Landing, 116 Paddle Wheel Drive, Wallace. Info: (910) 399-7563 or www.warmnc.org.

6/20 Airlie Concert

6 – 8 p.m. Shine perform rock and roll classics at Airlie Gardens. Admission: $8. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7700 or www.airliegardens.org.

6/20–21 NC Blueberry Festival

11 a.m. – 8 p.m. (Friday); 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. (Saturday). Annual festival celebrating the cultivation of blueberries in the southeast including a BBQ cook-off, recipe contest, car show, antique show and sale, arts and crafts vendors, education and farming exposition, food vendors, beer and wine garden, children's activities and live entertainment by The Craig Woolard Band, The Classic Collection Band and The Fantastic Shakers. Admission: Free. 207 South McRae Street, Burgaw. Info: (910) 259-2007 or www.ncblueberryfestival.com.

6/20–22 Writers Conference

12–8 p.m. (Friday); 8 a.m. – 8:30 p.m. (Saturday); 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Sunday). Three days of workshops, discussions and readings, highlighted by an exciting keynote address by Jason Mott, as well as workshops with UNCW's creative writing faculty: Dana Sachs, Michael White and Hannah Dela Cruz Abrams. UNCW, 601 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3000 or library.uncw.edu.

6/21 Oakdale Walking Tour

10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Historical walking tour of North Carolina's oldest rural cemetery given by local historian and Civil War author, Bob Cooke. Admission: $10. Oakdale Cemetery, 520 North Fifteenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-9947 or www.oakdalecemetery.org.

6/21 Antiquity Dinner

6:30–7:30 p.m. Antiquity Dinner with Canapé Restaurant at historic Bellamy Mansion. Bellamy Mansion, 503 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-3700 or www.bellamymansion.org.

6/22 Birding Kayak Tour

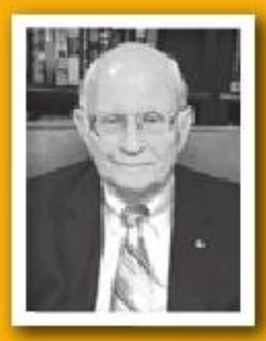
6–9:30 a.m. Join Wild Bird & Garden and Mahanaim Adventures for a morning of kayaking and bird watching through the Fort Fisher Basin for the summer solstice. Reservations required. Admission: $45, in-

Brightmore UNIVERSITY SERIES

A Diverse Program for Lifestyle Enrichment

An Afternoon with Jim Dodson
"One of Today's Most Esteemed Golf Writers"
Wednesday, June 4th, 3 p.m.

Jim Dodson, winner of over a dozen major awards from The Golf Writers of America and a 20+ year veteran columnist for *Golf Magazine*, is the author of ten books, four of which are *New York Times* best-sellers. He is editor of award-winning arts and culture magazines – *Salt* in Wilmington; *O.Henry* in Greensboro and *PineStraw* in Southern Pines. Don't miss this opportunity to be entertained by a born storyteller and lover of golf! *(Wine & Cheese Reception to follow.)*



What is Horology?
Presented by Brightmore Resident, Robert Weeks, Master Clocksmith
Monday, June 9th, 3 p.m.

Join us for a segment of "Up-to-Date" and find out "What on earth is horology?"… Take a "journey through time" starting with the first timekeeping devices. Explore the science behind monster tower clocks, mechanical clocks and watches, pendulums and the Cesium Fountain Atomic Clock.

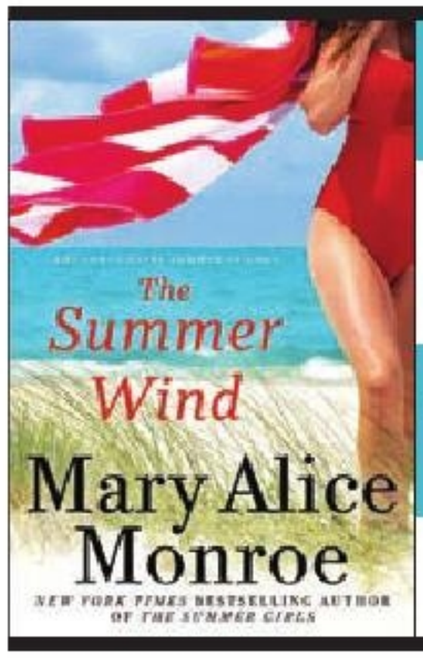
***Van Eeden* Talk and Book Signing**
Presented by local Author/Historian of the Lower Cape Fear, Susan Taylor Block
Monday, July 14th, 2 p.m.

Join us for another segment in our popular "Author's Series," as local Author and Historian of the Lower Cape Fear, Susan Taylor Block reviews one the latest of her many books. *Van Eeden* details Fredrick Van Eeden's Holocaust project, designed to save the lives of Jews living under Hitler's regime by moving them to Pender County."

Reserve your seat for these free events by calling 910.350.1980.

Brightmore Independent Living
2324 South 41st Street, Wilmington | 910.350.1980
www.brightmoreofwilmington.com

Arts & CULTURE



Join us for a wine and cheese party to welcome best-selling author

Mary Alice Monroe!
FRIDAY, JUNE 27 ★ 6PM– 8PM

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Gifts & Wine Bar

708 S. Anderson Blvd., Topsail Beach, NC
(910) 328-4969 quartermoonbooks.com

If you are enjoying this free publication hug an advertiser!

cludes kayak equipment. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

6/25 Birding Kayak Tour

8–11:30 a.m. Join Wild Bird & Garden and Mahanaim Adventures for a morning of kayaking and bird watching through Holly Shelter Creek. Reservations required. Admission: $45, includes kayak equipment. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

6/26 Sounds of Summer Concert

6:30 – 8 p.m. Jack Jack 180 perform pop, rock and alternative covers. Admission: Free. Wrightsville Beach Park, 1 Bob Sawyer Drive, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-7925 or www.townofwrightsvillebeach.com.

6/27 Gallery Walk

6–9 p.m. Self-guided tour through downtown Wilmington galleries and studios showcasing local art through opening receptions, demonstrations, artist discussions and exhibitions. Admission: Free. Various venues, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-0998 or www.wilmingtonfourthfridays.com.

6/27 Homestead Farm Dinner

4:30 p.m. Hors d'oeuvres and heirloom dinner of select Greenlands Farm ingredients prepared by the farm chef, wine selected by a local wine connoisseur, a farm tour and evening hay ride to the farm store. Junior dinner held 6/28. Greenlands Farm, 668 Midway Road SE, Bolivia. Info: (910) 253-7934 or www.greenlandsfarmstore.info.

6/27 Pleasure Island Concert

6:30–8:30 p.m. Polar Bear Blues Band perform rhythm and blues. Admission: Free. Fort Fisher Recreation Area, 118 Riverfront Road, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureisland.org.

6/28 Art Show

10 a.m. – 4 p.m. "Budding and Blooming" art show providing young artists the opportunity to be entrepreneurs for the day, selling their work alongside professionals. Enjoy live music and shop arts, crafts, jewelry, pottery and more. Mayfaire Town Center, Trysports Event Field, 6835 Conservation Way, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-4370 or www.wilmingtonart.org.

6/28–29 Patriotic Choral Concert

7:30 p.m. (Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). Sea Notes Choral Society's annual patriotic concert honoring and commemorating over 200 years of bravery and the anniversary of "The Star-Spangled Banner." Admission: Free. Odell Williamson Auditorium, Brunswick Community College, Highway 17, Bolivia. Info: www.seanotes.com.

6/29 Group Singing

1:30–4 p.m. Cameron Art Museum and WHQR present the Wilmington Sacred Harp Singers performing an intense a cappella social singing style dating back to Colonial America. Beginners welcome. Admission: Free. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

6/29 Art Garfunkel Live

7 p.m. Experience an intimate evening with Art Garfunkel, complete with an acoustic performance of his greatest hits, anecdotes and prose, as well as a Q&A. Brooklyn Arts Center, 516 North Fourth Street, Wilmington. Info: www.brooklynartsnc.com.

WEEKLY HAPPENINGS

Monday Farmers Market

8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside market offering fresh produce, baked goods and unique crafts directly from local vendors. Open through 10/4. Admission: Free. Seawater Lane, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-7925 or www.townofwrightsvillebeach.com.

Monday Turtle Talks

7–8 p.m. Learn about sea turtles with the Pleasure Island Sea Turtle Project. Program runs through 8/25. Admission: Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

Mon.–Wed. Cinematique Films

7 p.m. Independent, classic and foreign films screened in historic Thalian Hall. Check online for updated listings and special screenings. Admission: $7. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info/Tickets: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

Monday–Thursday Pottery Class

5:30–8:30 p.m. Hand-building, wheel throwing and sculpture for all skill levels. Choose any two classes with instructor Brian Evans and Dick Heiser. Class runs through 7/28. Admission: $150/registration; $13/bag. Hannah Block USO Building, 120 South Second Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-7860 or www.wilmingtoncommunityarts.org.

Tuesday Writing for Healing

6:15–8:45 p.m. Four week workshop for self awareness. Space is limited; registration required. Admission: $250; $75/one workshop. All Love Healing, 217 North Fifth Avenue, Wilmington. Info: (949) 547-4402 or www.alllovehealing.com.

Tuesday Kure Beach Market

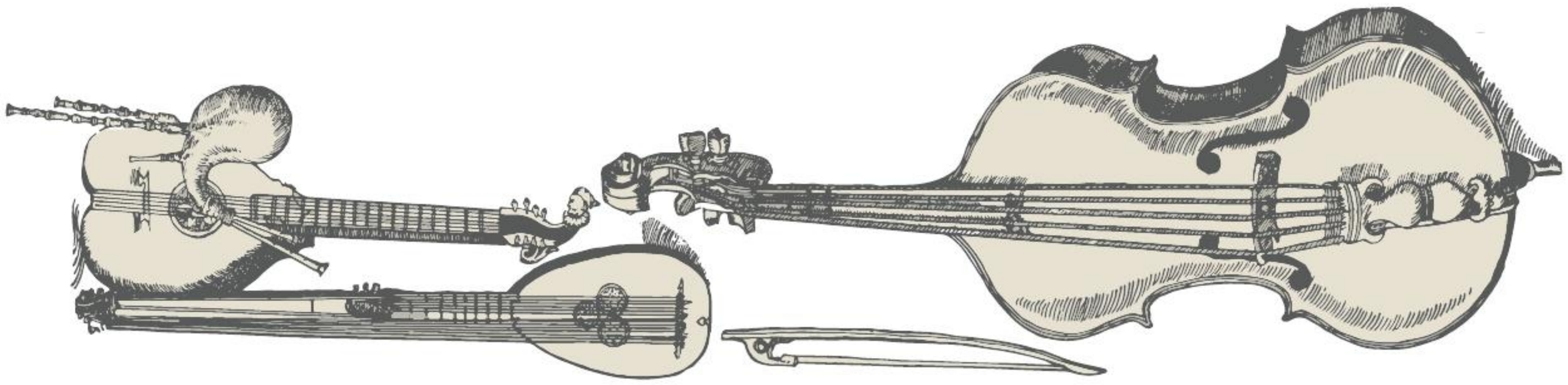
8 a.m. – 12 p.m. Open-air market featuring locally grown produce and artisan crafts. Open through 8/26. Admission: Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

Tuesday Cape Fear Blues Jam

8 p.m. A unique gathering of the area's finest blues musicians. Bring your instrument

JAZZ at the MANSION
A Concert Series
May thru September
June 12th: Serena Wiley
July 10th: Darryl Donnell Murrill
August 14th: Geno & Friends
September 11th:
Liz Pina with The Frog Project
Hosted at the Bellamy Mansion in Collaboration with the Cape Fear Jazz Society
910.251. 3700 // www.bellamymansion.org

Wilmington Art Association
The Premier Visual Arts Organization of the Cape Fear Coast
Annual Juried Spring Show and Sale
Workshops Led by Award-Winning Instructors
Gallery and Exhibit Opportunities
Monthly Member Meetings (2nd Thurs of month) and Socials
Member Discounts, Field Trips , Paint-Outs, Lectures & Demonstrations
New! Budding & Blooming Art Show
June 28th, Saturday, 10am - 4 pm
Artists Young and Old Display their Art.
ARTS • CRAFTS • POTTERY • JEWELRY • MUSIC & MORE!
Cheryl McGraw
Dorian Hill
Anita Jacques
Membership is open to artists & art lovers alike
Join Today & Support Local Art
www.wilmingtonart.org



and join the fun. No cover charge. The Rusty Nail, 1310 South Fifth Avenue. Info: (910) 251-1888 or www.capefearblues.org.

Tuesday — Wine Tasting

6–8 p.m. Free wine tasting hosted by a wine professional plus wine and small plate specials all night. Admission: Free. The Fortunate Glass, 29 South Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-4292 or www.fortunateglass-winebar.com.

Tuesday & Thursday — Pottery Class

9 a.m. – 12 p.m. Hand-building, wheel throwing and sculpture for all skill levels with instructor Heather McLelland. Class runs through 7/28. Registration: $150; Bag: $13. Hannah Block USO Building, 120 South Second Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-7860 or www.wilmington-communityarts.org.

Wednesday — Farmers Market

8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Open-air market held on the front lawn of Poplar Grove Plantation offering fresh produce, plants, baked goods and the best in handmade crafts. Family Day on 6/18. Open through 11/26. Admission: Free. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 U.S. Highway 17 North, Wilmington. Info: (910) 686-9518 or www.poplargrove.com.

Wednesday — T'ai Chi at CAM

12–1 p.m. Qigong (Practicing the Breath of Life) with Martha Gregory. Open to beginner and experienced participants. Members: $5. Non-members: $8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Wednesday — Wine Pairing

5–6:30 p.m. Come in for a Sweet 'n Savory wine pairing and learn about a specific style of wine every week as well as which foods best bring out its flavor. All bottles of wine are $5 off. Sweet 'n Savory Cafe, 1611 Pavilion Place, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-0115 or www.sweetnsavorycafe.com.

Wednesday — Beer Tasting

5–6:30 p.m. For this week's special, visit Sweet 'n Savory Pub on Facebook. Admission: Free. Sweet 'n Savory Pub, 2012 Eastwood Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 679-8101 or www.thepubatsweetnsavory.com.

Wednesday — Guided Meditation

6:15–7:15 p.m. A growing community of people who desire connection within themselves and with others. $10–15. McKay Healing Arts, 4916 Wrightsville Avenue, Wilmington. Info: (949) 547-4402 or www.alllovehealing.com.

Wednesday — ComedyNOW

8 p.m. Local, regional and national acts, open mics, standup, films and more. Bar and kitchen open. Tickets: $3. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3669 or www.theatrewilmington.com.

Thursday — Boardwalk Blast Music

6:30–9:30 p.m. Family-friendly concerts at the Boardwalk feature sunset firework displays. 6/5: Machine Gun (hard rock); 6/12: Chris Bellamy Band (easy listening); 6/19: Eastbound (country pop); 6/26: L Shaped Lot (contemporary bluegrass). Admission: Free. Carolina Beach Boardwalk, Cape Fear Boulevard, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureislandnc.org.

Thursday & Friday — Yoga at CAM

12–1 p.m. (Thursday); 5:30–6:30 p.m. (Friday). A soothing retreat sure to charge you up while you relax in a beautiful, comfortable setting. Sessions are ongoing and are open to beginner and experienced participants. Members: $5. Non-members: $8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Thursday & Sunday — CAM Public Tours

7:30 p.m. (Thursday); 2 p.m. (Sunday). Explore the newest exhibits at Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Friday — Music on the Town

6–9 p.m. Family-friendly concerts at Mayfaire Town Center with bounce houses, cotton candy and snow cones for kids. 6/6: Eastbound (country); 6/13: Beach Billy Brothers (country rock and blues); 6/20: The Other Guys (acoustic rock, pop and Americana); 6/27: Blivet (eclectic rock and pop); 6/30: Groove Fetish (jam rock). Admission: Free. Mayfaire Town Center, 6835 Main Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-5131 or www.mayfairetown.com.

Friday — Downtown Sundown

6–10 p.m. Free downtown concert series overlooking the Cape Fear River. 6/6: Same As It Ever Was (Talking Heads tribute); 6/13: The Breakfast Club (1980s tribute); 6/20: Tuesday's Gone (Lynyrd Skynyrd tribute); 6/27: Abbey Road Live (Beatles tribute). Admission: Free. Riverfront Park, North Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 763-7349 or www.downtownsundown.com.

Friday & Saturday — Sampling

6–8 p.m. (Friday); 12–5 p.m. (Saturday). Sample unique boutique wines as well as extra virgin olive oils and vinegars before you buy. Admission: Free. Taste the Olive, The Forum, 1125 Military Cutoff Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-6457 or www.tastetheolive.com.

Friday — Guided Group Meditation

6:30–7:30 p.m. Energy clearing meditation for closeness and connection. The Open Space, 411 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (949) 547-4402 or www.alllovehealing.com.

Friday – Sunday — Shakespeare on the Green

8 p.m. *Comedy of Errors* (directed by Robb Mann). Live Shakespearean theater, al fresco. Admission: Free. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-2878 or greenfielakeamphitheater.com.

Saturday — Farmers Market

8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside market featuring local farmers, producers, artists, crafters and live music along the banks of the Cape Fear River. Open through 11/22. Admission: Free. Riverfront Park, North Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-6223 or www.wilmingtondowntown.com.

Saturday — Farmers Market

8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Outdoor "island style" market featuring live music and local growers, producers and artisans selling food, herbal products and handmade crafts. Open through 10/4. Admission: Free. Carolina Beach Lake Park, Highway 421 and Atlanta Avenue, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 431-8122 or www.carolina-beachfarmersmarket.com.

Saturday — Super Saturday Fun Time

3 p.m. Live theater and variety show. Tickets: $8. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3669 or www.theatrewilmington.com.

Sunday — Movies at the Lake

8:45 p.m. Family-friendly outdoor movie screening by the lake at Carolina Beach. Popcorn, soda and candy available for purchase. 6/1: *Tom & Jerry: Robin Hood & His Merry Mouse* (2012, PG, 65 min.); 6/8: *Big Miracle* (2012, PG, 107 min.); 6/15: *Despicable Me 2* (2013, PG, 98 min.); 6/22: *Saving Mr. Banks* (2013, PG 13, 125 min.); 6/29: *Monsters University* (2013, G, 104 min.). Admission: Free. Carolina Beach Lake Park, Highway 421 and Atlanta Avenue, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureisland.org.

Sunday — Boogie in the Park

4–7 p.m. Family-friendly concerts in the park. 6/1: Central Park (rock, pop and dance); 6/8: Uncle Hairy (modern rock); 6/15: Port City Shakedown (party and dance); 6/22: M-80's (80s rock); 6/29: BLP (dance). Admission: Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 456-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

Sunday — Bluewater Waterfront Music

4–7 p.m. Summer concerts on Bluewater Waterfront Grill's gorgeous waterfront patio. 6/1: Mark Roberts (Motown and classic rock); 6/8: Central Park (classic rock and modern); 6/15: Lunar Tide (classic rock and modern); 6/22: Overtyme (classic rock and beach); 6/29: Heart & Soul (classic rock and beach). Admission: Free. Bluewater Waterfront Grill, 4 Marina Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-8500 or www.bluewaterdining.com.

To add a calendar event, please contact Ashley at ashley@saltmagazinenc.com. Events must be submitted the first of the month, one month prior to the event.

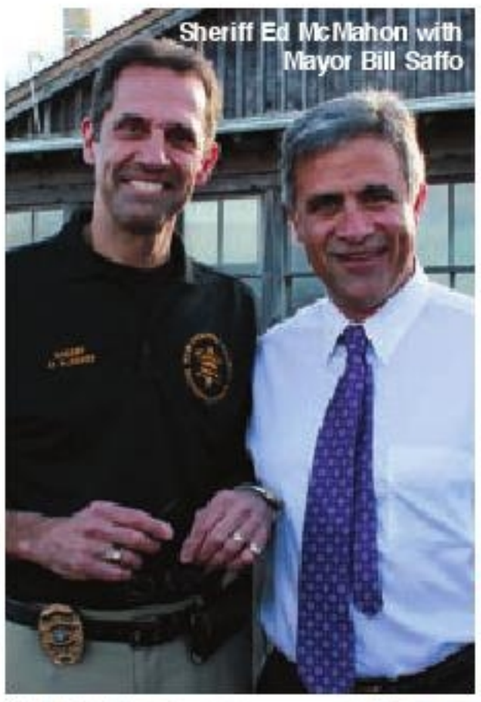
Port City People

Coastal Horizon Center's Walk A Mile In Her Shoes Event

Saturday, April 5, 2014

Photographs by Ariel Keener

Scott & Belinda Reed with Jamison, Jada & Syris


Sheriff Ed McMahon with Mayor Bill Saffo

Lauren Ballard & Liz Constantinou

Corrin Diestel & Brooke Kester

Walk A Mile In Her Shoes Participants

Fabian Torres & Jamie Thompson

Josh Heying & Alexis Kap

Kimberly Everett, Melanie Gatton, Ronell Rimes

Port City People

Smart Start Pledge Breakfast for Children's Champions at Landfall

Wednesday, April 2, 2014

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Clyde Edgerton

Randy Reeves

Meri Battles, Vanessa Vangilder, & Gabrielle Pike

Elizabeth Redenbaugh, Nick Rhodes, & Stephanie Kraybill

Di Chamblee, Jenna Geraci, & Maria McMurray

Reverend Cliff Barnett

Detective Amy Womble, Sheriff Ed McMahon, Detective Kelly Sellers

Port City People

Junior League Roast on the Coast

Saturday, March 22, 2014

Photographs by Ariel Keener

Krisiann Jackson and Kristen Byrd

Kelly Pittman, Dan Malone, Brooke Laton, Jennifer Haugland

Sally & Oscar Lindroos

Carolyn Byrnes, Meredith Cook, Rainey Wallace

Hayes Harkey & Chris Hoenig

Amanda McCarthy, Kristin Mikula, Brianna Montgomery, Alana Kennedy

Don & Dwain Baldwin

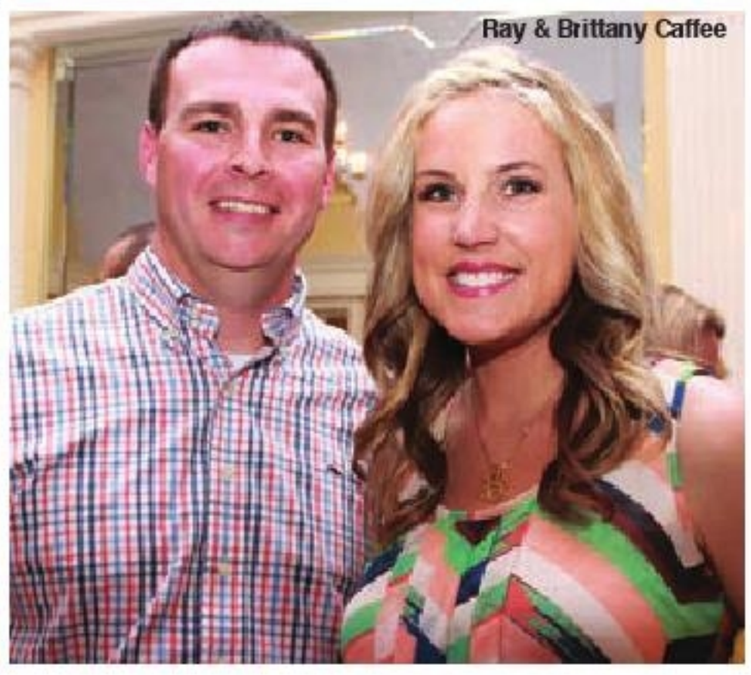
Joelle Schart, Baker Street, Ashley Twichell, Derek Wall

Bill & Erika Geisler with Claire & Daniel Reddick

Carter Benton, Lauren McLean, Megan Barbour

Susan Polomik & Mary Vance-Bartolo

Lisa White, Ron Robinson & Karen Steed


Ray & Brittany Caffee

Port City People

Wilmington Fashion Weekend Opening Night Party

Thursday, April 3, 2014

Photographs by Ariel Keener

Jessie Williams, Dawn Apple, Jacey Rogers, Cathy Luna, Christine Moore

Troy Butler, Tracey Frink, Steve Foster

Khalilah Olokunola with Mayor Pro Temp Margaret Haynes

Tyler & Kristin Klee

Jai and Lynne Jones

DJ Brian Hood and Connor McCaffrey

Michael Vinson & Mariah Finegan

Austin Terrigino & Colby Byrd

Christy Kilz & Jacklyn Barrios

Tracey Sirjue, Karon Tunis and Lynne Jones

Davina Thrower, Alexis Babaian, JJ Knight, Khalilah Olokunola

Lauren Lombardi, Amy Westberg, Chelsea Evans, Francesca Holt

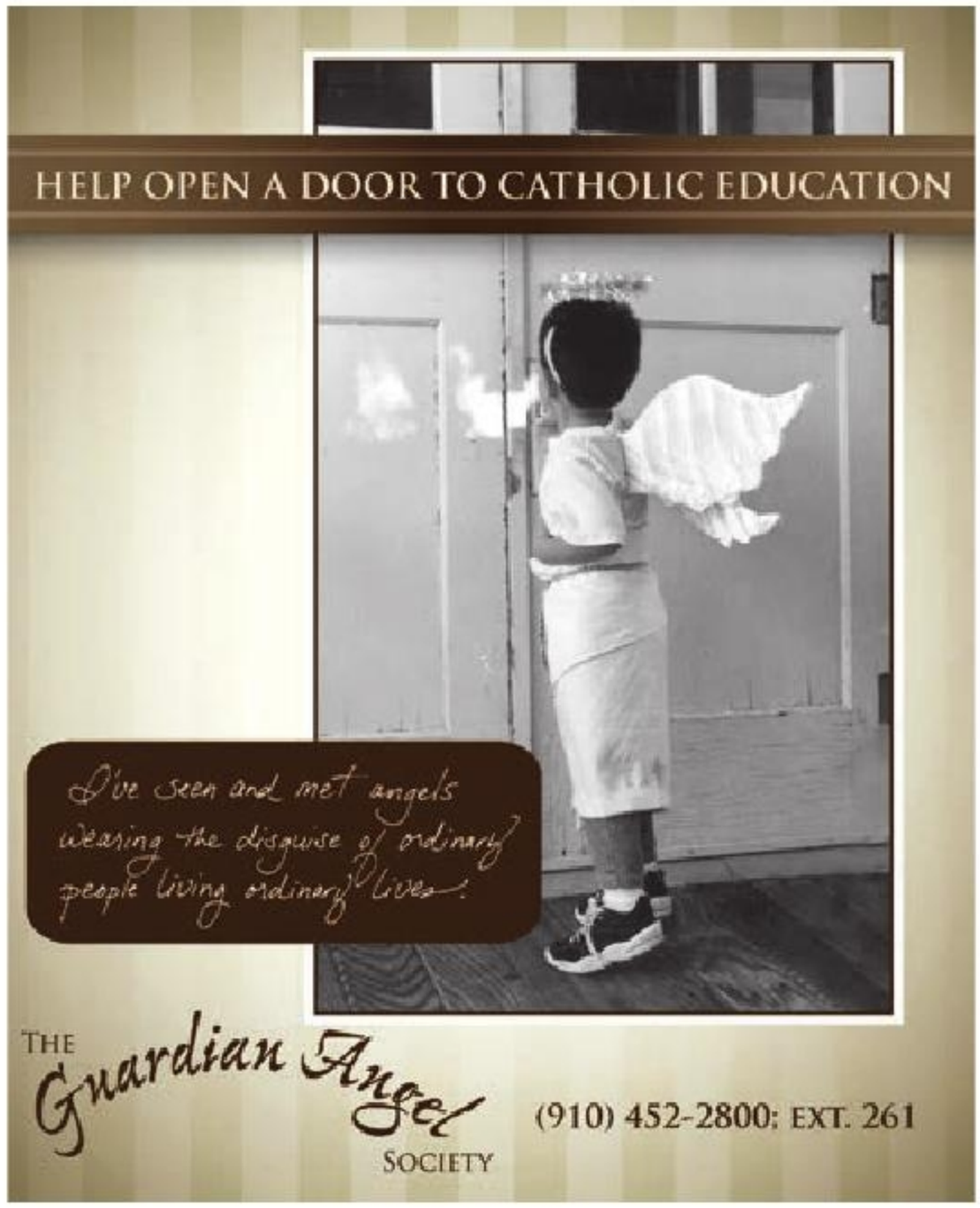
Hannah Lynne, Missy Boneske, Crystal Nichol

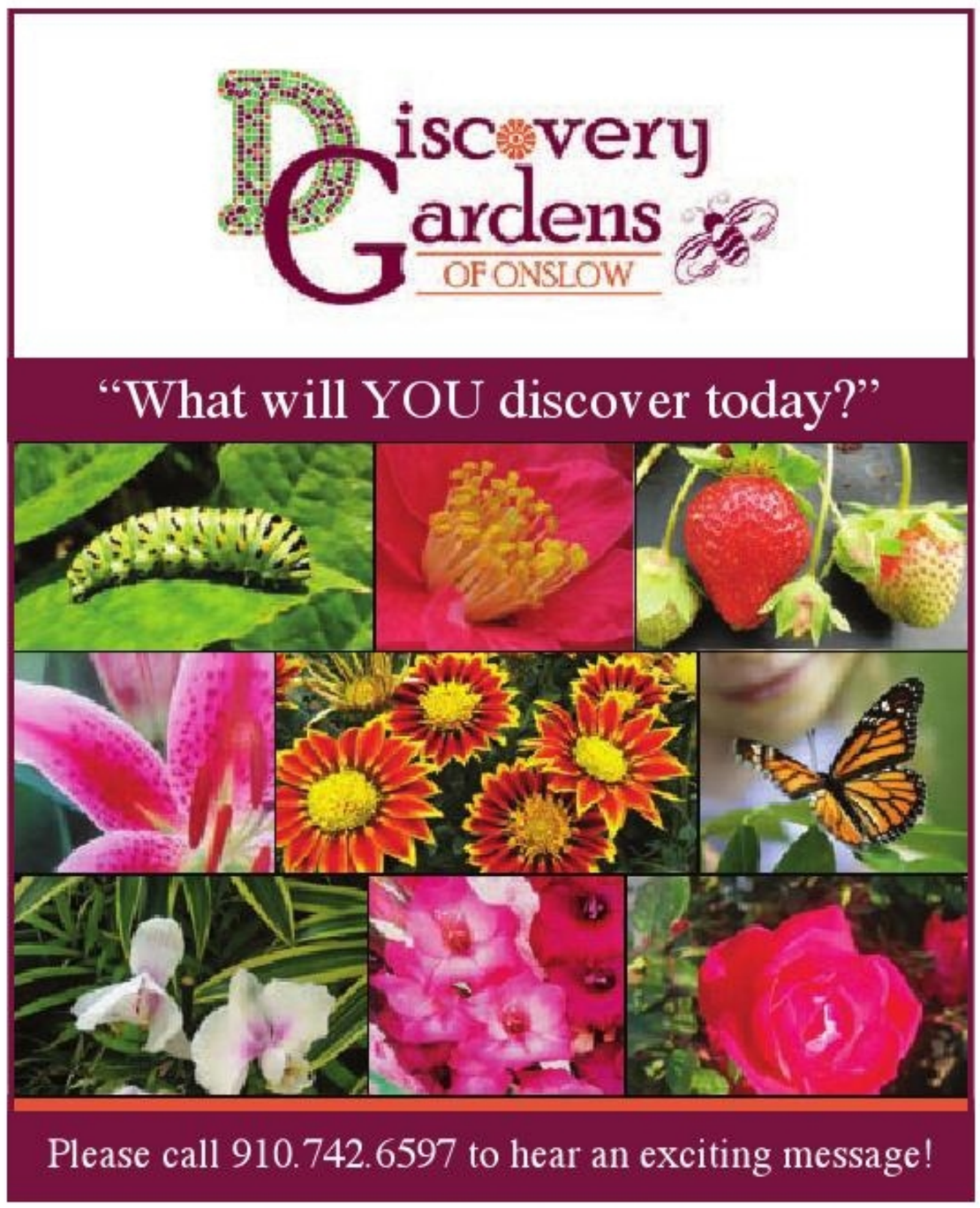
Divinity Garden

A Ministry of St.Therese Catholic Church

"A man has made at least a start on discovering the meaning of human life when he plants shade trees under which he knows full well he will never sit." D. Elton Trueblood

Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina
www.stthereseparish.net
(910) 256-2471


HELP OPEN A DOOR TO CATHOLIC EDUCATION
I've seen and met angels wearing the disguise of ordinary people living ordinary lives.
THE Guardian Angel SOCIETY
(910) 452-2800; EXT. 261



Bustin' Out All Over

June's here, honey. Open that bubbly stuff

By Astrid Stellanova

Bless my heart. Here it is, June, the sixth month, as in Juno, the Roman goddess of marriage. Astrid here is a romantic and loves me a little tulle, some pink roses and a summertime wedding. That "I do" button is a whole lot more fun to hit than the "undo" key. Re-do and do-overs are all part of the fun this month. Which raises the question: Will my cold-footed Beau ever put a ring on it?

Gemini (May 21–June 20)

Of all the people you spend time with, you like yourself the best. Is that bad? Good? Not my call, as anybody with a smidge of sense sometimes needs to recharge. Anywho, Honey, you have solitude galore in the stars this month, but by the end of June this comes to a halt when Venus slides into Gemini and everything changes again. By the 28th, not even a rainy day can kill your buzz.

Cancer (June 21–July 22)

Just about everybody gets whacked by that Mercury retrograde, and you won't escape either. Child, one thing you can do is do a real back-up — not as in, slam the Chevy into reverse, but back up as in save that suspense novel you've been writing onto the cloud. (Thought nobody knew, huh?) You are about to bring somebody into your inner circle. This new confidant ain't tall and mysterious but short and funny. What all this means is, you put your trust in somebody that ain't your usual type. That in itself is mysterious enough.

Leo (July 23–August 22)

Given the fact that you put so much stead in what your friends say instead of a shrink, the stars say be sure to get yourself some smarter friends. This is one of them months when you need good counsel, and Leo ain't often humble enough to ask for it. So, if it's given freely, take it. Beau has got a Leo friend who don't believe water's hot unless he sticks his finger in it. Your career track is slicker than the Indy 500 right now. Your love life? Not so much.

Virgo (August 23–September 22)

Money-making mania continues in your sign this month, and you will be whooping it up like some fool on *Let's Make a Deal*. With the stars in your favor, risk is perfume for you, fortunately or not, and you're acting like you hold a royal flush. I don't care if you think this entitles you to play video poker the live-long day, 'cause it just ain't healthy. Get you some sunshine and a square meal. The Virgo fun ramps up by month's end when Venus enters Taurus and skin wins. You cash out and hide the money under the mattress to chase the love jackpot.

Libra (September 23–October 22)

By the middle of the month, a full moon (on the 13th) delivers good news and surprises concerning family and travel. I've said it before: Keep a bag packed, wear clean underwear and top off the Kia's gas tank. Another new moon arriving on the 27th brings a nice work surprise. Your new work interest may not be Don Draper, but he might be D. B. Cooper's alter ego. If he tells you something surprising, keep your face straight and act like you suspected it all along.

Scorpio (October 23–November 21)

Scorpios are the Crock-Pots of this old universe — slow cookers, Baby, either always cooking something up or about to boil over. The stars know a Scorpio ain't going to give away much about themselves. As my Scorpio Mama says, she is good at keeping secrets if they are her own. When Neptune is retrograde this month, you get very introspective and start cleaning up some old business. This is a good thing and will lay a foundation for something better. Change is here.

Sagittarius (November 22–December 21)

Frustrations might lead you to take stock and muscle toward changes that leave you in a better place. Empty the attic, closet and basement. Clear the garage. If you find them Cabbage Patch babies, hit Ebay and find a buyer, because this month ain't a good time for Sagittarians to get a loan. Funnel that fear into something else, Child, because Grandpa Hornblower says fear is just false evidence appearing real.

Capricorn (December 22–January 19)

Relying on luck is like putting your trust in a man working at the women's cosmetics counter. Too much blush never looked good on nobody but a clown. Whatever happened to trusting your own fine self, Honey? Take charge and don't let nobody get your name on a contract until you know it is the best deal you could broker. I didn't sign on no dotted lines when I developed my STIFF hair care products without my Philadelphia lawyer, Albert B. Arbitrage, signing off first.

Aquarius (January 20–February 18)

Are you prepared to kick back and take it easy for a change? That's June for you, Baby. Think tranquil. Think quiet. Just don't think too much. After mid-month, Mercury makes some moves that will affect you in July but not just yet. You will have a lot of dream time — lots of time to muse, make nice with friends, and just — do what Aquarians do so well. Peace out, Child. Don't bust outta that lounge chair unless somebody's holding out a lemonade.

Pisces (February 19–March 20)

I already know you didn't take Astrid's advice last month to try a new hair color. Maybe you're easy, but you sure ain't no pushover, Lordamercy. The good news is, you get a second chance because once again, things are nuttier for your sign than my Cousin Mabel's fruit salad. Try temporary color. Be bold and beautiful. I done told you it's better to change your hair than tear it out, because this month is buggy and you surely will know it.

Aries (March 21–April 19)

Chaos, hair on fire and crossed wires. Sound familiar? That's just any old day if you're a fire-eating Aries. You leave all that, and more, in your wake. Stash the cash. Change your passwords. Clunk the burglar on the head with a can of Raid and then spray it in his eyes. Hide the body if it comes to that. Honey, this month is more than you counted on when Venus enters Gemini on the 23rd. If you're still of childbearing age, take "extry special" precautions, Star Child.

Taurus (April 20–May 20)

Honey, you still got it, and this month you are hell-bent on finding and wooing somebody who still wants it. You will succeed, as you possess exceptional woo-powers this month. But let's bet when you do woo, you'll want somebody else almost immediately. Your powers to charm are equal to your powers to bewilder, sweet thing. Want you they will — it's just that your romantic self sees spring-green opportunities in almost every pasture. June is your wait-wait, back-up month. And when you look at the charts, a retrograde in Mercury on June 7 fiddles with all the reset keys on your console.

For years, Astrid Stellanova owned and operated Curl Up and Dye Beauty Salon in the boondocks of North Carolina until arthritic fingers and her popular astrological readings provoked a new career path.

The Whiz

When you need a maddening tech problem solved, go find a 10-year-old kid. Problem solved

By Clyde Edgerton

Back in April, during the Azalea Festival, I took an iPhone photo of two of my children sitting on a wall atop the main downtown parking deck. We would return to the car after dark to watch the fireworks.

In the photo, same as the last few photos, the light looked fuzzy. I thought to myself, I'm going to have to go to the Sprint store, put my name on a list, wait till they call my name, then talk to a representative and explain the problem. She will take my phone, look at it, walk to a computer, sign in, and ask for my phone number. She will ask me a security question like "What country would you like to visit?" I will have forgotten coming up with that question, much less the answer, so she'll ask me my mother's maiden name, which I'll remember. She'll then hand me a brochure that explains options regarding phone repair. She will tell me that if I switch phone companies before my contract runs out, then any automobiles and life insurance policies that I own will be turned over to Sprint. And I will be sent to a labor camp in outer Alaska.

I'm thinking all this while walking from food booth to food booth, still waiting for the fireworks, staring at another fuzzy photo of my kids standing next to a hot dog.

The next day, thinking about my fuzzy fireworks photos, I wonder if I can figure out a way to change places with someone rather than take my phone to the Sprint store — say, someone who is about to have an appendectomy. I'm driving along in the car worrying about this. My 10-year-old son, Nathaniel, sits beside me in the passenger seat. I tell him about the photo problem. He says, "Hand me the phone." I do.

He finds my wife's, Kristina's, sunglasses case, pulls out the little glass cleaner cloth and cleans the tiny camera lens. He takes a photo of me (with light in the background), checks out the camera roll of photos, hands me the phone, and says, "Look at the last photo when you get a chance." We stop at a stoplight and I do. His photo? Beautiful, clear-as-a-bell-no-fuzzy-glow.

I suddenly remember when Nathaniel was 6 years old and we bought a Nintendo Wii for our home. This is the Wi-Fi system where you play golf and baseball, etc., on a video screen while sitting on the couch holding a wireless remote. Six months later it went whacko. I spent an afternoon trying to get it working.

Nathaniel walked into the playroom and said, "Let me try."

"There's no way," I said. "But go for it." I walked out, wondering who I might contact for help.

Thirty minutes later Nathaniel called me back into the room. The Wii was working. I asked him how he did it and he said, "I don't know." I was so amazed I called my good friend David McGirt, and told him what had happened. David and I sometimes share funny stories.

He said, "Did you read the Wii instructions?"

"Well, yeah, but . . ."

"There's a sentence in there you must have missed. It says, 'When you can't fix the Wii, put a 6-year-old in the room with it for half an hour.'"

Kids are often able to keep problem-solving simple and direct: Parents are sometimes too sophisticated. Too often in my experience these days — with the new stuff — it's them teaching me rather than the other way around.

I need some hammer and nail projects.

Clyde Edgerton is the author of ten novels, a memoir, and a new work, Papadaddy's Book for New Fathers. *He is the Thomas S. Kenan III Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing at UNCW.*

ILLUSTRATION BY HARRY BLAIR

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168 Beach Road South
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5 Oyster Catcher Road
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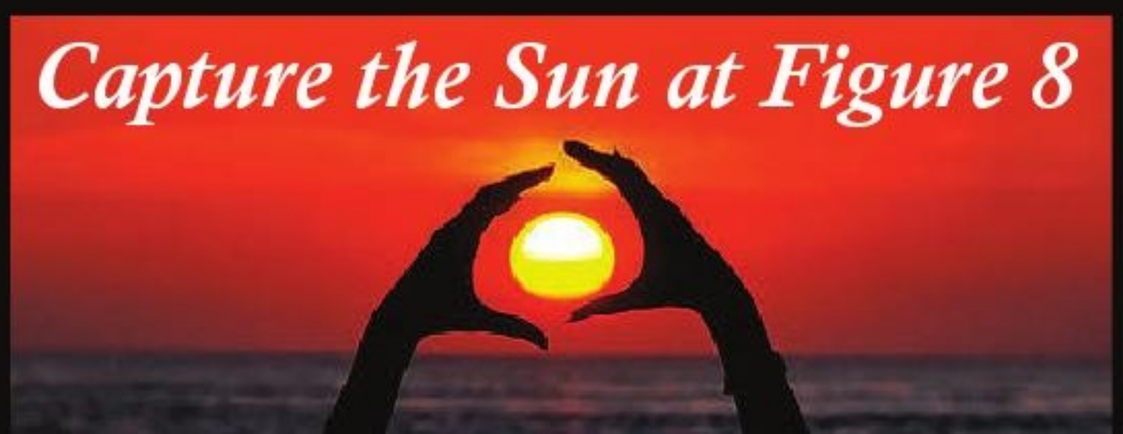

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